

# Bandwagon



THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JULY AUGUST 1975





## THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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### THIS MONTH'S COVER

The artwork on both the front and back cover of this issue were used by the Sig Sautelle's Nine Consolidated Railroad Shows in 1912.

Both are window cards, 10 3/4 x 14. in size and are lithographed in full color. They are good examples of special litho designs used by smaller railroad circuses during the 1910 to 1920 period.

Sig Sautelle operated circuses from 1885 to 1914, often with other partners. Only a few of the last seasons were on rails. Sautelle was known as one of the great wagon show owners.

The original window cards were printed by the Erie Litho Co. and are from the Pfening Collection.

### CHS ELECTION COMING

This fall the election of officers and directors of the Circus Historical Society will take place. Donald M. Hensey, 5510 Thirty Third St., Kenosha, Wisconsin

53140, has been appointed Election Commissioner for this election.

It is suggested that you check page 12 of the membership roster if you are interested in nominating a person.

Commissioner Hensey reminds all members that the election procedure is a lengthy one, as we are dependent on the mail service. Therefore he requests the following:

If you receive a communication from the election committee, please answer immediately. And that your ballot be read carefully and marked promptly and returned prior to the deadline.

### NEW MEMBERS

Douglas A. Sowle 2213  
136 2nd Street  
Breckenridge, Michigan 48615

Mavin Jay Yagoda 2214  
28585 South Harwich Drive  
Farmington Hills, Michigan 48024

Michele Malvern 2215  
223 Grimsby Road  
Kenmore, New York 14223

Bob Rosenberg 2216  
9144 "B" Niles Center Road  
Skokie, Illinois 60076

Kristen N. Meyer 2217  
2649 North Sacramento  
Chicago, Illinois 60647

Conrad A. Rousseau 2218  
100 Utah Avenue  
Somerset, Mass. 02726

Donald F. Curtis 2219  
211 West Beaver Avenue  
State College, Penna. 16801

### CONVENTION REPORT

For the tenth time in twenty-nine years the CHS met in convention in Baraboo, Wisconsin this year on the first and second of August. Once again, the fine facilities at the Circus World Museum were put at the society's disposal and a nice series of meetings were the result. For the first twenty-five conventions the usual format of badges, ballads and banquets was followed, but this year, as in the preceding three years the emphasis has been on the presentation of papers on the circus and periods of research. This year, on Friday morning, the members heard from Chang Reynolds on the subject of animal diseases as they affected circus operations; from Bob Parkinson on some results of the cataloguing process at the Museum; from John Polacsek on the circus in New Orleans during the Civil War and from Stuart Thayer on Connecticut laws affecting public amusements.

On Friday afternoon those in attendance made heavy use of the archives in aid of various research projects, ably assisted by the library staff. Friday evening movies from the collection were shown. On Saturday the first presentation was by Dan Draper on the subject of the history of the Howe, Howes and London titles down through the years. C. P. Fox solved the mystery, or announced its solution, of the last unidentified wagon in the Museum collection, number 85. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. gave a paper on the history of cannon acts. An unusual opportunity was given the members on Saturday afternoon when Noyelles Burkhart, former manager of Cole Brothers and Ringling-Barnum, sat down with them and answered all their many questions concerning the circus business during his years of activity. This special event was arranged by C. P. Fox.

Comments by those present indicated that everyone enjoyed the meeting, it is unfortunate that more members do not avail themselves of these events. The thanks of the committee go to William Schultz and Robert Parkinson of the Museum for their kindness and contribution toward the success of the convention.



**\$5.00**

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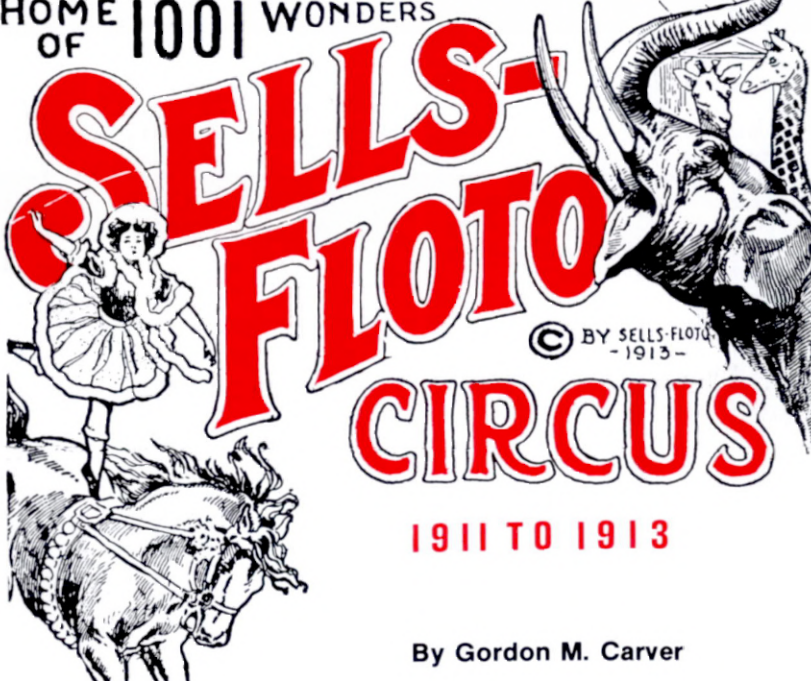


# BIGGEST CIRCUS IN THE WORLD & HOME OF 1001 WONDERS

# SELLS- FLOTO CIRCUS

© BY SELLS-FLOTO  
-1913-

1911 TO 1913



## Season of 1911

With the start of the 1911 season more peaceful days lay in store for the Sells-Floto show. Tammen, at last, seemed to have gotten most of his ill-will toward the Ringlings out of his system, although a little would still crop out from time to time. Perhaps his set-backs at the hands of the Texas courts compared to the Ringling's success in the admission tax matter and his virtual winning of the battle over the use of the Sells name had finally calmed him. Bonfils also probably used his influence. In any event, from this point on Sells-Floto was just another large circus in the field, making it on merit rather than fighting.

Again, as in 1910, and as they would for some years, they opened the season at Albuquerque, N.M., on Saturday April 1. The

By Gordon M. Carver

*Billboard* notice of the opening did not give an itemized review although all the performers were listed. It did state that the performance was greatly strengthened over 1910 and that it places "this circus on a level, quality considered, with its larger contemporaries". Again for this season prices were to continue at 25c for the big show and 5c for the annex or side show when 50c and 10c were the fairly general standard.

The show, after Albuquerque, moved to El Paso, Tex., on Monday, April 3, and then quickly away back through Arizona at Douglas, Bisbee, Nogales, Tuscon, Phoenix

**The big top canvas is laid out on a lot of the Sells-Floto show in 1911. A canvas spool wagon is on the left in front of the menagerie tent. Pfening Collection.**

and Yuma. It started its California tour at San Bernardino on April 10. After playing a number of towns in the southern part of the state including San Diego 15, Los Angeles 17-18, Long Beach 19 it moved north through Bakersfield 24, Stockton 27, reaching San Francisco for a five day stand May 3-7.

In San Francisco the parade was not given until the second day, May 4. The performance was being given in a fairly large top. It was a sixty foot round with three fifty foot middle pieces. There were two rings and a center stage. The reserved seats were all fifteen high star-backs. Although nowhere in the literature or advertising is mention made of reserved seats it certainly is a reasonable presumption that an extra fee was charged for the privilege of sitting in a better location and on a seat with a back and place for one's feet.

The menagerie was housed in an eighty foot round top with three forty foot middle pieces, but still with only ten cages in it, plus six camels, but now nine elephants, three more than before but still few for what otherwise was a fairly large show. The annex or side show was in a sixty foot round with two thirty foot middle pieces. By the middle of May there were fourteen acts, quite a bargain for only five cents.

The side show was managed by A. S. Conlon whose wife did a mind reading act. There were no "freaks" in the show, only novelty type acts, one whose name was Prince Mungo. He had been on the show for some years and was to continue to be a part of the annex for several more years, yet at no point are we given even a hint as to the nature of his performance. Also, in the show was the Bayrooty troupe, the oriental "kootch" dancers whose torso flexions raised such a storm of protest in some locations, but who would seem "Sunday School" by today's standards.

The other principal tops were the dressing-padroom top, a sixty foot round with two thirty foot middle pieces, and a stable top for the draft stock, a seventy foot round with three forty foot middle pieces. This latter was a fairly large top but then it was reported that the show had about two hundred horses which included the ring stock. While we have no way of knowing for sure there is some evidence that would lead us to suspect that the ring stock probably numbered only about fifty horses leaving a balance of around one hundred and fifty draft horses. This would appear to be





about the right number to haul the approximately fifty wagons and cages on the show. The show still had no motorized equipment although that was not too far in the future. The remaining tops were the dining top eighty by forty feet and the cookhouse about thirty by thirty feet.

After San Francisco the show played around central California for about ten days and then started eastward for awhile. They were in Reno and Winnemucca, Nev., May 18-19 and Salt Lake City 21. After four more towns in Utah they moved north and west into Idaho at Pocatello 26 and Boise 29 and then into Oregon at Baker City 31. It is interesting that, unlike most shows of that period they did show frequently on Sundays. Out of twenty-eight Sundays on the road they gave performances on ten. On June 2 they were in Pendleton and on 5-6 in Portland. They made Vancouver, Wash., 9 and were at Vancouver in Canada 12 and at New Westminster 13 and then back into the U.S. at Bellingham, Wash. They were in Seattle 19-20.

During this part of the tour, in late May and early June, there had been one injury to a performer reported in *The Billboard*. Miss Maude Rollins, equestrienne, collided with a quarter pole as she was galloping from the tent and knocked to the ground. Another horse, following her, kicked her and "fractured her skull it is thought. *The Billboard* concluded, "the accident may prove fatal". Although there were certainly many serious accidents in circuses *The Billboard* did seem to be rather morbid about them. As an example, in the October 1, 1910 issue, it reported that John Carroll was killed as the result of a riding accident, yet we find him back on the show in 1911 working with the Rhoda Royal Company as a horse trainer and rider.

With few exceptions most of the performers on the show were there for the first time. Aside from Rhoda Royal, the Hobson, Bedini and Lowande riders, Lizzie, Lucia Zora, wife of the menagerie and elephant Supt., Fred Alispaw (Chris Zeitz was gone from the latter job after several years in it) and one or two lesser names virtually the entire roster was new. Even among the clowns there appeared to be no returnees. Perhaps the only new name that was to become a well known one on many of the big shows in years to come was the Walter Guice Aerial Bar Troupe. W. P. English had a band of Twenty - twenty-five pieces. While the bands in those days, even on the small shows, were larger than we have been used to in later years we must remember that there was then no electronic amplification.

In the June 24 *The Billboard* there appeared a large three quarter page ad that said "SELLS-FLOTO WANTS For the Season 1912. Write now or Any Time Till November 1. The Biggest and Best that money can buy, in novelty, in size, in sensation - an act - or acts - groups or troupes - a single act - or display. If any reader, whether you have been with a circus or not, has a suggestion to offer, the same will be appreciated and will be paid for, if accepted. The idea of this early 1912 announcement is because Sells-Floto success prompts its owner to now begin building for next season the greatest and largest circus performance, outdoing any now traveling, and the admission price will remain 25 cents. Sells-Floto has the

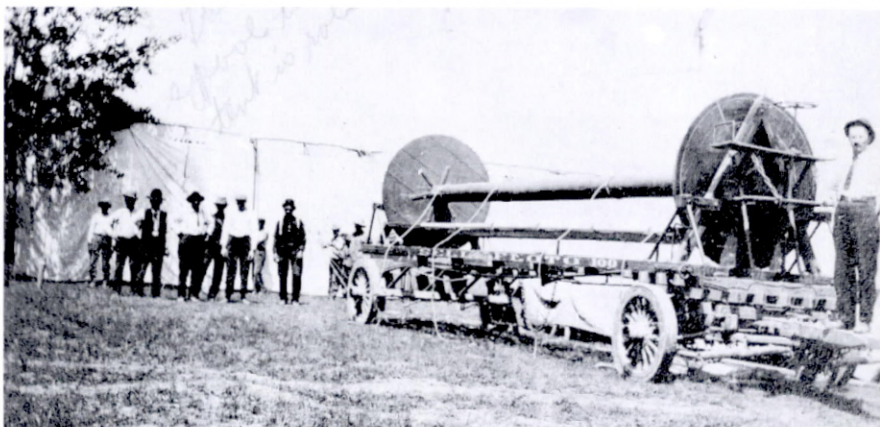


**The ticket wagon and side show entrance are pictured here during the 1911 season. Conover Collection.**

reputation of being the carefree circus, coming east in August from the Golden West - although warned by the opposition never to set foot east of the Missouri River. Three trains double length cars - 600 people - 450 horses and animals - mile long street parade - seats for 10,000 people - admission 25 cents - no more. No expert has been able to figure how for 25 cents admission a profit can be made, as daily expense is \$3,200. The sufficient answer is we have plenty of money and are not stingy". This ad is curious in a couple of respects. Obviously Tammen still has piqued at the Ringlings or "the opposition" as he called them for warning him not to "set foot east of the Missouri River". In any event he obviously ignored it since he spent one month east of the Missouri. Whether this warning was actual or a figment of his imagination is questionable. Second, the ad was more like an advance notice addressed to the general public announcing the coming of the show, not a notice to other show people who most certainly saw through the exaggerations of "three trains," etc. It certainly makes me wonder what kind of a man Tammen was.

By July 7 they had gone through Idaho and Colorado and entered Montana at Missoula 7.

**This 1911 view shows one of Bill Curtis' canvas spool wagons, the spool was cranked by hand, prior to a gasoline engine being added. Conover Collection.**



They were on their way to Canada which, after playing Helena and Great Falls 12 and 13, they entered at Lethbridge, Alta., July 15. They played ten more dates in Canada at Edmonton 17, Calgary 19, Medicine Hat 20, Moose Jaw 21 and ended at Winnipeg 26-27. They returned to the U.S. at Crookston, Minn., July 28, after which they went into North Dakota for stands at Grand Forks 29 and Fargo 31 and then back into Minnesota at Fergus Falls on August 1. On August 7-8 they were in Minneapolis and the next two days in St. Paul.

The show this year was traveling on thirty cars as it had since 1909 when it had added four. The consist now had only one advance car, although there was also an advance brigade that traveled on regular trains. There were seven sleepers and nine stock cars, one of which carried the nine elephants, including the two young ones, Kas and Mo, and six camels. The remaining eight stocks carried the horses. If the cars were only sixty footers, there was room for some 208 horses. If, on the other hand, they were only fifty footers, as was quite possible, they would have had room for only 176 horses. There were thirteen sixty foot flats which would have accommodated about fifty wagons. Handling this train and the loading and unloading was George Brown, in his fourth year with the show in this capacity.

Other bosses who had been with the show in previous years were Fred Hutchinson, the Manager; Henry Gilbertson, who had the concessions and was General Superintendent; Rhoda Royal Arena (or Equestrian) Director; and Fred Alispaw who had the menagerie and elephants. The "outside" men were William





This cage is an example of the fine carved wagons used by the Sells-Floto show in its early days. The photo was taken in the Denver winter quarters. Woodcock Collection.



Some of the lead stock is shown in front of the wagon shed in the Denver winter quarters of the Sells-Floto Circus. Woodcock Collection.

Curtis, Supt. of canvas; George Stumpf, Supt., of draft stock; and Wilford Embleton, Supt., of lights. A few of the others who were new to the show, in the advance, were Ed Werner, Gen. Agent; William Roddy, Gen. Contracting Agent; A. Bennett, Gen. Press Representative; and Harry Graham, Mgr., of Advance Car #1. Back with the show the cookhouse was in the hands of George Dynan while Charles Brady assisted by Charles Luckey had props. Ray Vincent was in charge of the ring stock.

Leaving the Minneapolis-St. Paul area the show went south into Iowa and Illinois, then into Michigan and Ohio from whence it turned west again. They were in Dubuque, Iowa, August 14, Elgin, Ill., 18, South Bend 22, Battle Creek 23, Detroit 28-29, Dayton, Ohio, September 1, Cincinnati 3-5, Indianapolis 7, St. Louis 11-13, Sedalia 15, Kansas City, Mo., 17-18, and Kansas, Kan., 19. They were now in their final month. This stretch brought the report of another injury to a performer in *The Billboard*, Mamie Saunders on September 12 at St. Louis. In the afternoon performance she was thrown to the ground and trampled. "Her back and breast were bruised and right shoulder and neck severely wrenched. It is unknown if there were internal injuries". While *The Billboard* didn't forecast death this time it certainly did suggest the possibility of serious consequences.

By September 15 they were in Oklahoma City and then in Texas at Dallas 28 and Ft. Worth 29. In Temple, October 5, they day and dated Ringling Bros. According to *The Billboard* there was no trouble and although a town of only 10,000 population it was a profitable stand for both shows, many people going to one show in the afternoon and the other in the evening. After a few more towns in Oklahoma and Texas the season finally closed October 14 in Amarillo. While nothing much was said all indications pointed to the presumption that it had been a successful season. Except for the one day and date stand at Temple with Ringling Bros. there was no indication of any close opposition that hurt profits in any way., a rather unusual condition in those days of many circuses.

### Season of 1912

The season of 1912 proved to be one of some particular note for Sells-Floto. There seem to be reasons to believe that the show was further

improved but there is no clear proof. Certainly the show received much more coverage in the press than it had heretofore.

In 1911 a group of outdoor showmen had formed the Showmen's Association for the purpose of bettering relationships in the industry. Harry Tammen had been elected its first President. He did not last long in the job though, for *The Billboard* reported his resignation in the January 20, 1912 issue. Its comments about him at this time did throw an interesting light on his personality and in some measure explain some of the things that he did with his show. "Since Mr. Tammen has always been recognized as an uncertain quantity according to \*\*\* showmen, it is not probable that his withdrawal from the Association will embarrass it in any way, although there is no question but that the membership would have been delighted to have him remain as a member and an officer, and his impulsive remarks and quaint philosophy will be greatly missed at future meetings." Based on the things he had done before, this is probably a very charitable description of him. Undoubtedly he was what we might otherwise call a "hot head".

On Saturday, March 30, for the third year in a row, Albuquerque, N.M., was the opening stand. *The Billboard*, this year, gave good coverage to the show's opening, devoting almost two columns to the review. This was the most attention it had ever given a Sells-Floto opening. Both performances had capacity audiences. The parade was said to be magnifi-

## SELLS-FLOTO CIRCUS

(Season of 1911)  
**OFFICIAL ROUTE**

<p>\$1,000,000 CAPITAL INVESTED</p> <p>\$3200 DAILY EXPENSES</p> <p>635 PEOPLE</p> <p>MILE LONG PARADE</p> <p>TWO HERDS ACTING ELEPHANTS</p> <p>1020 WILD BEASTS</p> <p>100 ACTS IN 100 MINUTES</p> <p>4 BIG ARENAS</p> <p>450 HORSES</p> <p>ALL FOR 25¢ ADMISSION</p>	<p>Mon. June 12 Vancouver, B. C.</p> <p>Tues. June 13 New Westminster, B. C.</p> <p>Wed. June 14 Bellingham, Wash.</p> <p>Thur. June 15 Everett, Wash.</p> <p>Fri. June 16 Olympia, Wash.</p> <p>Sat. June 17 Aberdeen, Wash.</p> <p>Mon. June 19 Seattle, Wash.</p> <p>Tues. June 20 Seattle, Wash.</p> <p>Wed. June 21 Tacoma, Wash.</p> <p>Thur. June 22 Cle Elum, Wash.</p> <p>Fri. June 23 North Yakima, Wash.</p> <p>Sat. June 24 Pasco, Wash.</p>
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General Offices and  
Winter Quarters  
**Denver, Colo.**

cent, a clean, spic and span aggregation of animals and performers. It is said that the performance gave the crowds complete satisfaction and pleasure. The program that was offered for the price of twenty-five cents was in keeping with that offered by other shows charging a higher admission. Special mention was made of the clowns and their several production numbers and the opening Spec, conceived by Rhoda Royal, in which the Black Hussar Troupe introduced a distinctive equestrian novelty entitled "The Gathering of the Garlands" displaying the skill and beauty of sixteen horses and riders.

But most attention was given to Display No. 16 "a thriller from beginning to end \*\*\* in which Omar, equine aviator, and Miss Flora Robinson ascended to the dome of the tent in an aeroplane. When the dome was reached there burst forth a great display of pyrotechnics which lasted several minutes. When the blinding display of fireworks had ended, Omar and his rider descended to earth." Here was an act that would really startle and amaze the natives, and endanger them too for there was no fireproof canvas in those days.

The whole program was as follows;

#### Display No. 1

The Grand Processional Spectacle

#### Display No. 2

The Black Hussar Troupe. Introducing an equestrian novelty-entitled "The Gathering of the Garlands"

#### Display No. 3

The forty clowns

#### Display No. 4

Ring 1 - Mazeppa, the marble horse  
Stage - The De Louvre Troupe -living statues  
Ring 2 - May Day, the marble horse

#### Display No. 5

Ring 1 - Herd of elephants presented by Mlle Lucia Zora

Stage - George Brown, English clown with his trained dogs

Ring 2 - Kas and Mo, the twin little elephants presented by Ethel Roberts

#### Display No. 6

Ring 1 - Bareback riding by Miss Emma Stickney

Stage - The clowns duet, Jack Harris and Jerry Clayton in a vocal knockabout

Ring 2 - Equestrienne performance by Effie Dutton

#### Display No. 7

The Still Alarm. The associate clowns headed by Jim Rutherford discover a building on fire in the center of the tent.



**Display No. 8**

Ring 1 - The Lindemanns, balancing on the slack wire

Stage - The Stadium Trio. Acrobats and comic juggling by F. Decker and the clowns

Ring 2 - The Gabbarts, gymnast act

**Display No. 9**

Military and cannon act, introduced by Horace Webb (producing Clown). The program announces that a human being is actually shot from the mouth of a loaded cannon.

**Display No. 10**

On the hippodrome track the Rhoda Royal Troupe of menage horses ridden by Miss Rhoda Royal, Miss Marie Elser, Miss Ida Miaco, Chas. Dailey, Bertram Potter, John Ryan, John Fuller, Miss Maude Burbank, Miss Evalin Bublely, Miss Aldene Potter and Miss Flo Fuller

**Display No. 11**

The clowns and revolving tables

**Display No. 12**

Ring 1 - Indian riding act

Stage - Indian camp representatives from the Indian tribes giving portrayals of camp life on the plains.

Ring 2 - Indian riding act

**Display No. 13**

A mixed number including the Stadium Trio on swinging perches; Kelly Bros burlesque ladder act; Five Delemead Sisters, evolutions on the ferris wheel; Webb Family, aerialists; Maude Johnson, swinging ladder.

**Display No. 14**

Omar, the equine aviator accompanied by Miss Flora Robinson

**Display No. 15**

A Grotesque Clowns Company introducing Horace Webb, Shorty Maynard, Jame Rutherford, Jerry Clayton, and Jack Harris

**Display No. 16**

Ring 1 - The Black Liberty Horse Troupe introduced by Bertram Potter

Stage - Miss Carrie Queenly presents her trained dogs and ponies

Ring 2 - White Liberty Horse Troupe introduced by John Carroll

**Display No. 17**

James Rutherford and the clowns in a sketch entitled the Bride Elect

**Display No. 18**

Mixed number; rolling globes by Miss Lowande and Miss Kelley; Balancing on the wire by Miss Johnson and Miss Dutton; feats on the high ladders by Miss Galarmo and Miss Masters.

**Display No. 19**

Ring 1 - Hurdle riding by Miss Emma Stickney

Stage - A mixed number of horse play and burlesquing of the riders in the rings

Ring 2 - Jockey act by Homer Hobson

**Display No. 20**

Ring 1 - Jasper mules hurdle riding by shorty Maynard

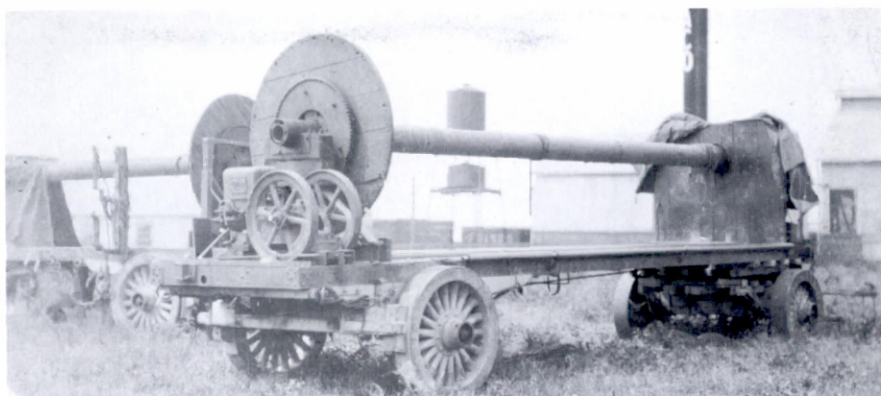
Stage - The clowns roller skating frolic

Ring 2 - Sailor mule hurdle riding by Ab Johnson

**Display No. 21**

Hippodrome races and other interesting contests

The clowns were a big feature of the performance and given much publicity. Along article by Horace Webb, one of the producing



**By 1912 Bill Curtis had added power to the canvas spools, two of the wagons are pictured that year. Pfening Collection.**

clowns on the show, appeared in *The Billboard* of March 9 describing in some detail the various numbers. It was his opinion that this season "the best clowning circus, not barring the big ones, will be the Sells-Floto Shows". He made particular mention of Jim Rutherford, the principal producing clown, and "his big spectacular fire gag, with the assistance of the entire forty clowns and Mr. Tammen's real fire engine drawn on the scene by two fast horses and with fireman and driver dressed in natty uniforms. This and several pounds of red fire burned each show makes such a realistic scene \*\*\* the audience wonders whether or not the fire will be conquered. The finale shows the police patrol wagon rushing in and the officer arresting the clown guilty of arson". Other production numbers were "the suffragette" and the "Wedding Breakfast". Horace Webb was the producer of the gags of the man being shot from the cannon, (preceding the burlesque of the Zacchini act on the Ringling-Barnum show by a good twenty-five years) as well as that of an exploding air ship in which he

**Fred Alispaw, head elephant trainer for many years on the Floto show is pictured in 1912 with a group from the herd. Pfening Collection.**



falls some thirty feet. He also described many of the walkaround gags including two of his own, one of which, just to show that there is nothing new under the sun, was a dog made up like a horse pulling a small sulky along the hippodrome track. He also specifically mentions the Olifans with their "big figure head walkaround stuff" and the Four Nelson Comiques "who have a worldwide reputation as laugh provokers". This summary of the article gives a fairly good picture of what must have been very good clowning on the show.

The musical program was under the direction of W. P. English and assisted by Karl King who two years later would be the Bandleader and ultimately go to Barnum & Bailey. As we now know, he became a prolific writer of band music and a music publisher in his own right. But as of now he was getting started. There were twenty-eight instruments in the band including seven cornets (one of which was English), three trombones, five clarinets, one E flat clarinet, one saxophone, one flute and piccolo, three horns, three basses, two baritones (including Karl King) and two drums. A one hour concert was given before each performance. Considering this, the performance and anywhere from one to two hours of playing in the parade, the musicians put in a good day of blowing.

After the opening in Albuquerque the show followed essentially the same route west as in 1911 arriving in Los Angeles for three days





April 15-17. Thereafter they proceeded northward in California getting to Salinas April 25. There one of the big events of circus history took place. A happening that had never before occurred while a circus was enroute. It was on this date that the first of elephant Alice's two babies, "Baby Hutch" was born. The father was Snyder, originally called Jumbo the second, when he was purchased from the Hagenbeck Zoo in 1908. He was to sire three babies for Sells-Floto.

Alice went into labor about 1 P.M. getting very restless. By two o'clock it was difficult to restrain her. The baby was finally born about 5:30 P.M. At first it showed little sign of life, but about half an hour it stretched and stood up. It was taken to the railroad yards and placed in a warmed stock car. Alice was then brought to the car but was so unruly that she could not be kept in the car with the baby. For three days she was milked to supply food for her baby but then dried up and Baby Hutch (named after Fred Hutchinson the Manager) was kept alive on a specially prepared formula of Bartlett's Mineral Water, Borden's Condensed Milk, some burned flour, strained rice water and a tiny bit of brandy.

On April 29 when it was only five days old it was placed in a large cage in the menagerie. There was straw and a large ball in the cage with which she enjoyed playing. The cage was also pushed around the hippodrome track by Alice during each performance. Baby Hutch weighed 180 pounds at birth and was two feet tall. Then six weeks to the day after its birth it was killed when a fire broke out in its stock car, Thursday, June 6 at Pendleton, Oregon. But

**Horse power is used to unspool the big top canvas from one of the spool wagons in 1912. Pfening Collection.**

short lived as it was the show received tremendous from it.

The show arrived in San Francisco May 2-5 and played the central valley for about three weeks, Petaluma 8, Bakersfield 13, Fresno 16, Sacramento 18, and then into Oregon at Medford 23. Only one date was played in Washington at this time, Vancouver June 1, then it was back into Oregon at Portland 2-3. From there the show moved east into Idaho playing Weiser 9, to Pocatello 14 when it entered Utah. Salt Lake City was the stand on June 17 and then it moved into Idaho for one day at Idaho Falls 18 and then into Montana for a week.

Somewhere before this John Carroll had left the show and returned to his home in Reedsville, Wis., where on June 25 he died from TB. He was well liked and news of his death was greeted with many expressions of sorrow from the show people.

Another two day stand was played June 30-July 1 at Great Falls, Mont., followed by a move back through Idaho arriving in Washington at Pomeroy July 10 for an afternoon only show. This date raises some interesting questions about the routing of the show. Pomeroy is located at the end of a Union Pacific R.R. spur about twenty-five miles from the main line. It is almost as far from the next

**The midway of the Sells-Floto Circus is pictured here during the 1912 season. Pfening Collection.**



stand, Walla Walla, as the previous town, Lewiston, so it didn't serve to break an otherwise long jump. It is in very isolated country, the nearest town being at the mainline junction. Pomeroy today has a population of about 1,600. What it was in 1912 I do not know. Even if its population were double or more than then, it could hardly hope to fill a tent that probably could seat about 7,000. (The Billboard stated 10,000). Perhaps this was then a flourishing mining community and the show may have raised its admission to \$1 and 50 cents for the side show as it had in the past in some mining communities. In any event it is interesting speculation.

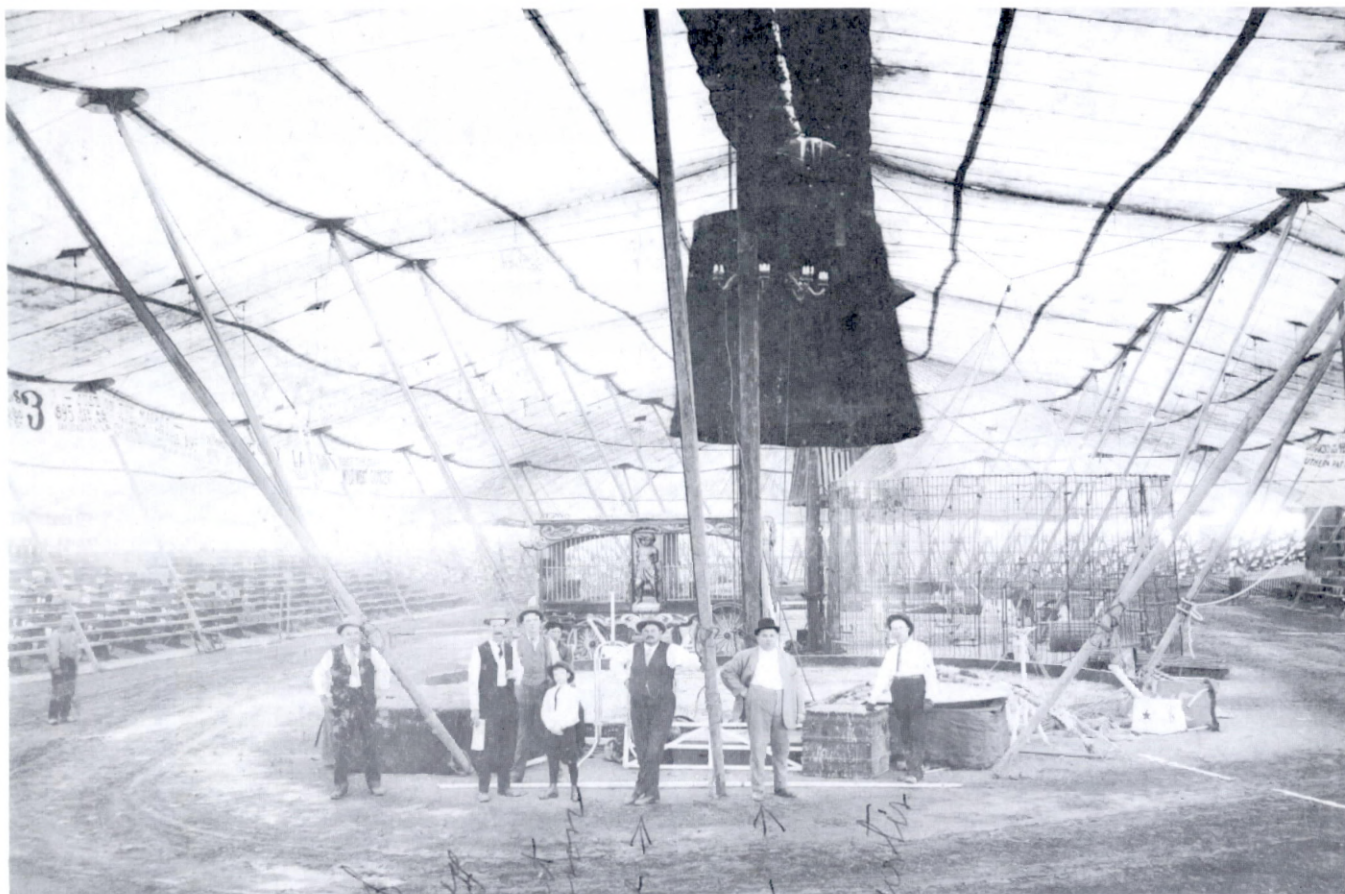
It next played Seattle 15-16, Tacoma 17, Olympia 18 and entered Canada at Vancouver, Monday 22. After New Westminster 23 it was quickly back in the states at Bellingham 24 and then started winding east reaching Spokane 29-30. The show entered Canada August 2 at Fernie, B.C., and spent the next three weeks moving eastward through Lethbridge 3, Medicine Hat 5, Calgary 6-7, Edmonton 10, Saskatoon 12, Regina 13, Moose Jaw 14, and Winnipeg 20, returning to the U.S. at Grand Forks, N.D., 11.

The principal members of the staff of the show remained practically unchanged from 1911. On the advance only the two local contractors, W. Murphy and W. Haines and one of the two 24 hour men, Jack Reck, were new. Back on the show the cookhouse was now run by Dixie Engler and Eli Meiser had the ring stock. This lack of change was unusual for the show which prior to this had had numerous changes in most years.

William Curtis, Supt., of Canvas, now for a number of years, had come up with the first of his several labor saving and safety devices that he was to develop on and for the Sells-Floto Circus. This was the canvas spool wagon, an improved variation of which is still in use today on even the small motorized shows. This first year of its use, interestingly enough, it was hand operated. A large crank extended from the rear of the wagon, which, turned by several men, operated a reduction gear that turned the large spool upon which the canvas was rolled. However, sometime before the 1913 season, whether during the 1912 season or later we do not know, a large one cylinder gasoline motor was substituted for the hand operated crank, further reducing the hand labor. While this device probably saved no time, it certainly saved most of the heavy hand labor of rolling the canvas into the big sectional bales and then lifting them into the wagons. It also took little extra space on the flat cars (it was thirty feet long, whereas, the total length of the two canvas wagons required would have been about twenty-six feet) so that it was very much of a net gain for the show. In later years two more of these wagons were added, another to handle the larger big top and one for the menagerie. Also after the show was acquired by the American Circus Corporation one of the wagons was used on the John Robinson Circus.

Along about mid-August while the show was playing through Minnesota, South Dakota and Iowa it ran into some warm and rainy weather. Fred Alispaw had tried to remate Snyder and Alice after the death of Baby Hutch but Alice had not seemed in-





**This cabinet photo taken in 1912 shows the inside of giant big top used by Sells-Floto in 1912. The large black curtains hanging in the center were used by the**

**statue acts. The steel arena was offset from the other rings and remained up during the performance, as the wild animal acts were staged throughout the**

**program. The cages were brought into the tent, rather than using shoots from outside the tent. Bill Curtis is the man standing on the right. Pfening Collection.**

terested. But Alispaw reasoned that warm rainy weather might be a more natural condition for elephant mating so during this period he tried again and this time was successful. I might add that pictures of the mating were taken which show that it was necessary to dig a shallow hole in the ground for Alice. Whether this was always required or whether animals in the wild do this themselves is unknown to the writer. But it made the mating successful and it was soon evident that Alice was again "in a family way". However, since the gestation period of elephants is twenty to twenty-two months the show was to have a long wait for another elephantine offspring.

After playing August 26-27 in Minneapolis and then Omaha 30 and York 31 the show meandered about through the midwest until they hit Wichita, Kan., on September 21. Here they played a "day and date" with Ringling Bros. Circus. Here, as in Temple last year, the two shows just quietly competed with mutually satisfactory results. After this the show began its last five weeks, most of it in Texas. On September 23 it was in Kansas City, Mo., Tulsa 30 and Amarillo Tex., October 5 and reached Galveston 26 followed by Houston, Monday 28. It is interesting that the circus grounds there were at Louisiana and Bell, now part of the downtown business district of Houston. At Houston it had competition from

Barnum & Bailey which played there the next day. Neither show seemed concerned about the other as far as the newspapers indicated as neither used any extra advertising, nor mentioned the other show. Sells-Floto was "the first in" according to the papers and perhaps

**A carving of a buffalo was used on this small parade wagon on Sells-Floto in 1912. The carving was later placed on a larger tab wagon when Buffalo Bill joined the show. Don Smith Collection.**

this is why it seemed so unconcerned.

As an aside, the Barnum & Bailey got some bad publicity the following day as a result of an accident during its parade. A side walk awning roof collapsed from the weight of people watching the parade. Some twenty were injured but only two seriously. The adverse publicity to the show came about as a result of its failure to stop the parade to let ambulances and other rescue vehicles through until forced to do so by the police.

After Houston the season came to a rapid







The big show band appeared in the parade mounted on horses in 1913. Pfening Collection.

end. The last three stands were Austin 31, San Marcos November 1, and San Antonio 2. From there a special MKT train took nearly a hundred of the staff and performers to St. Louis from where they scattered to the Northeast and South. Before doing this though, William Curtis had been presented with a diamond studded Moose Lodge pin on behalf of the entire working force. And as the show loaded out for Denver and winter quarters already big things were brewing for the show for the 1913 season.

### Season of 1913

The big news of early 1913 was the signing of William F. (Buffalo Bill) Cody to combine with the Sells-Floto show for the seasons of 1914-15. In the first few weeks of the year there was much gossip and rumor concerning the split of the Buffalo Bill Wild West and Pawnee Bill Far East Combined Shows and the fact that Cody would join Sells-Floto. These rumors were finally confirmed in the *Billboard* of February 15. In this issue letters from both Tammen and Cody were printed that affirmed that the "Two Bills" show would continue the season of 1913 as planned, but that Cody would be with Sells-Floto for the seasons of 1914-15. This would be a tremendous shot in the arm for Sells-Floto and quite a feather in Tammen's cap. However, it had cost Tammen and Bonfils some \$20,000 to help Cody keep out of bankruptcy to consummate the deal. The \$20,000 was in the form of a loan for six months at 6% interest, a rather high rate for those days. But this was only the start of the Tammen-Bonfils-Cody "deal" as far as the Denverites were concerned.

The "Two Bills" show arrived in Denver for its performances there on July 21 and was immediately attached for its failure to pay its debts. Whether Tammen or Bonfils had anticipated or planned this maneuver in advance could never be learned but there is every reason to believe that they were not totally innocent of paving the way. But whether they were or not a public auction of the show took place in Denver on August 21. This sale was later found to be legally in error and a second sale was held on September 15. This sale, according to *The Billboard*, brought in about \$50,000. So we can be sure that Tammen and Bonfils got back

their \$20,000 plus interest, plus at the usual show auction bargain prices a goodly amount of show property that they would be able to use in enlarging Sells-Floto for 1914. They acquired twenty-two wagons, some horses, all the poles and other miscellaneous equipment. Since their show was to be considerably enlarged for 1914 we must assume that they acquired some of the flats and other railroad cars as well. However, we are now well ahead of our story.

The season of 1913, after all the Buffalo Bill publicity which was really for 1914 but which certainly brought the name of Sells-Floto to national attention, was kicked off by another publicity coup. Elbert Hubbard was a writer and editor of *The Philistine*, a popular and rather widely read "magazine of protest" and opinion. He also edited a larger but less well read magazine, *The Fra*. In *The Philistine* he printed an article about his visit to the Sells-Floto Shows. He said among other things "this show has a few things that distinguish it from all other of the sawdust ring. The Sells-Floto folks have the fattest, sleekest, happiest lot of animals you ever saw in your life. Not only are they not underfed; but they are not overfed;

Capt. Dutch Ricardo and his wife presented the wild animal acts on Sells-Floto for many years. Ricardo is shown here in 1913. Pfening Collection.



The cowboy band also made the parade while riding horses. Two mounted bands in a single parade was most unusual. This is a 1913 photo. Pfening Collection.

moreover they are fed in the right way and at the right time. And best of all they are loved. \*\*\* Last year Sells-Floto carried more than two hundred horses thru a season from April first to October first without losing an animal." This, of course, is the kind of publicity that can be of tremendous benefit to a show and it must be considered a feather in Tammen's hat that he pulled it off.

This year the show used two advance cars with twenty-eight back. While the show was not physically larger, the program did appear to have been strengthened. Also, the performance was now given in three rings rather than in two rings and a stage as heretofore, which allowed for somewhat more versatility in programming. Finally, while not apparent to the record breaking crowds that filled the tents at the opening, the seating had been made safe from collapse by another of Curtis' inventions. It was a chain going from the foot of the stringers to the base of the rear jack which prevented the stringers from sliding forward, as they sometimes had in the past, and taking the seats with them. While there were few changes in the show there were also few changes in the staff. George Brennan was now trainmaster and Charles Luckey had moved up to be Superintendent of Properties. Harry Wills had the calliope.

The show continued to use Albuquerque as its opening stand where it appeared Saturday, March 29. *The Billboard* again gave the show somewhat more space in its review of the opening than it had in prior years. It said that the large crowds were greeted with many improvements chief of which was the entertainment with many new acts some of which had never before been seen in an American circus. It went on as follows:

"Following the garland act (the Gathering of the Garlands held over from 1912 and in three rings) is a thriller - a huge elephant named Floto backs an animal wagon into the arena and three lions and three tigers are turned loose in a steel cage. Margaret and Captain Ricardo, lion and tiger trainers, act as a reception committee to the beasts, one armed with a chair and the other with a whip.

"Clowns on stilts then take the eyes. Next are Rosalie and Emma Stickney and Mrs. Homer Hobson, equestriennes and bareback riders.



\*\*\* A burst of attractions happen in rather bewildering array; contortionists, and acrobats go through marvelous aerial stunts; \*\*\* then, Omar, the balloon horse act, a dog and pony show in itself and Rhoda Royal's daredevil number. The big feature of the performance is the appearance of Devlin's Zouaves, an aggregation of well directed soliders." This latter act had a group of about fifteen men doing pyramid building, wall scaling and other semi-military athletic maneuvers and was rather an eye catching act.

The complete program follows;

#### Display No. 1

The Grand introductory Spectacle

#### Display No. 2

The Rhoda Royal Black and White Horse Hussar Troupe introducing an equestrian novelty entitled "the Gathering of the Garlands"

#### Display No. 3

The forty clowns. The hullabaloo of a fire

#### Display No. 4

Ring 1 - Mazeppa, the marble horse. Miss Flo Robinson, trainer

Ring 2 - Forty clowns

Ring 3 - May Day, the marble horse

#### Display No. 5

Ring 1 - Mamma, elephant queen of the herd, introduced by Prof. Fred Alispaw

Ring 2 - Herd of elephants introduced by Mlle. Lucia Zora

Ring 3 - Twin elephants, Kas and Mo, chaperoned by Miss Franklyn Dreska

#### Display No. 6

Miss Margaret Ricardo introducing her troupe of African lions and Bengal tigers

#### Display No. 7

A mixed clown number

#### Display No. 8

Ring 1 - Miss Emily Stickney, accomplished horse-woman

Ring 2 - Miss Emma Stickney, equestrienne

Ring 3 - Miss Estella Hobson, bareback equestrienne

#### Display No. 9

Capt. Dutch Ricardo introducing Virginia, the riding Bengal tiger, an arenic feature

#### Display No. 10

Ring 1 - Mons. Lowande, high rope balancing act

Ring 2 - Fred Biggs, comedy on the high wire



Lucia Zora presented the elephants with her husband Fred Alispaw. Zora is shown here in 1913. Pfening Collection.

Ring 3 - Misses Johnson and Luckey, expositions of acrobatic excellence

#### Display No. 11

Introducing the Famous Royal Scotch Kilty band of Toronto, Canada

#### Display No. 12

On the hippodrome track the Rhoda Royal famous Troupe of menage horses ridden by Miss Rhoda Royal, Miss Maude Burbank, Leo Hamilton, Irene Montgomery, Miss Flo Fuller, Bertram Potter, Aldene Potter, Charles Dailey, Marie Elser and John Ryan

#### Display No. 13

Ring 1 - Revolving table for comedy  
Ring 2 - Happy Johnnie Riley and his rolling hoops assisted by the associate clowns

Ring 3 - Revolving table. Little Sunday, pony, rides the whirlingig when all others fail

#### Display No. 14

Mixed number of aerial acts including Miss Johnson, swinging ladder; Kester Family, double trapeze; Kelly Brothers, Breakaway

of a section of star back seats after the elephants had come through. Pfening Collection.

ladder; Irene Montgomery, swinging ladder

#### Display No. 15

Fred Rouen walking upside down

#### Display No. 16

Mixed number of marvelous excellence

Ring 1 - Black liberty horses introduced by Aldene Potter

Ring 2 - The famous mule, Snowball, which appears with Officer Harris and Ab Johnson in a mixed farce

Ring 3 - White liberty horses performing entertaining evolutions under the direction of George Brown

#### Display No. 17

High jumping horses Luckett ridden by Leo Hamilton and high jumping contest between Ebony, Luckett, White Wings and Tallyho.

#### Display No. 18

Omar, the horse with wings controlled by Mlle. Marceaux rises to the top of the tent in a balloon amidst fireworks

#### Display No. 19

Shorty Maynard, the clown

#### Display No. 20

Ring 1 - Contortion act by Miss Luckey and Miss Miaco

Ring 2 - Contortion act Howard and Welles

Ring 3 - Dracula, high pedestal contortion and Maude Johnson

#### Display No. 21

Jockey and gentleman principal riding acts in three rings by Messrs Hobson, Lowande and Potter

#### Display No. 22

Ring 1 - Miss Mae Kelly, rolling globe

Ring 2 - Clowns and boxing kangaroos

Ring 3 - Miss Josie Lowande, trained pigeons and doves

#### Display No. 23

Devlin's Zouaves

#### Display No. 24

The Mephisto number including ten men devils and ten lady devils on swinging ladders

#### Display No. 25

Ring 1 - Jasper, mule hurdle riding by Shorty Maynard

Ring 2 - The clowns roller skating frolic

Ring 3 - Cotton, mule hurdle riding by Ab Johnson

#### Display No. 26

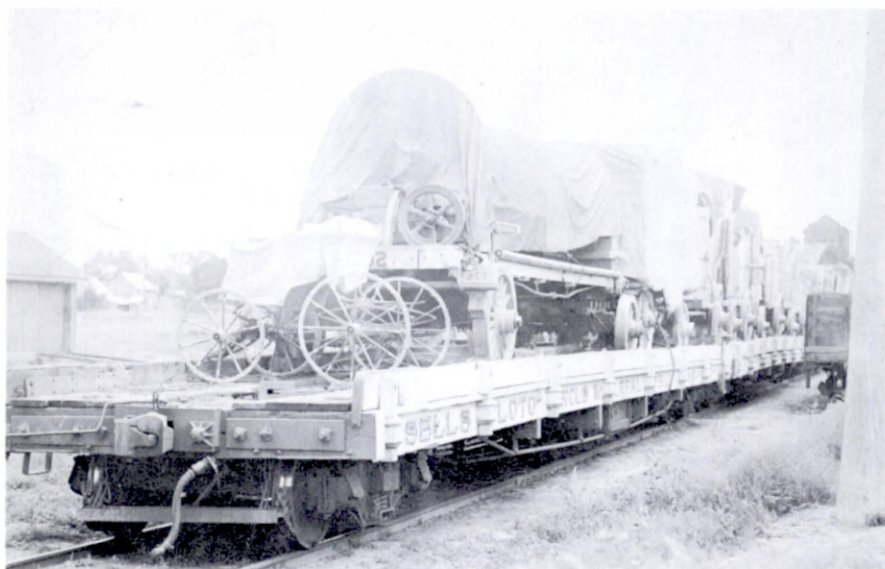
Hippodrome races and other interesting contests including Roman chariots

Zora is shown here with the two baby elephants Kas and Mo in a parade around 1913. Pfening Collection.

On July 29, 1913 the Sells-Floto elephants stampeded in Winnipeg, Canada. This photo shows the condition







**This view shows a typical 60 ft. wooden flat car used by Sells-Floto show in the 1911-1913 period. Pfening Collection.**

After the opening the show followed very closely the same route as in 1912 going east to El Paso March 31 and quickly back west through Tuscon, April 3, Phoenix 5 to Los Angeles for three days, Thursday through Saturday, April 10-12 followed by two days at San Diego 14-15. The show then moved northward through Long Beach 17, Pasadena 19, Bakersfield 21, Fresno 24, Stockton 26 finally reaching San Francisco for four days, May 1-4. After San Francisco the show wandered about the north central coastal region finally starting a move eastward at Sacramento 14. Two days later it was in Reno 16 and then at Ogden, Utah 19. Here, because of heavy rains preceding the arrival of the show and very wet grounds it was necessary to put the side shows and menagerie tops a block away from the big top. How the customers got from the menagerie top to the big top was not explained but some unusual arrangements were certainly necessary.

Ogden had been the start of some trouble, for over the next several days a series of minor difficulties arose. At Salt Lake City 21, while switching the cars prior to unloading, an engine hit the stock cars too hard with the result that several horses were thrown down in the horse cars and injured, although none seriously. Then the next day at Logan, again as the cars were being spotted in the yards, a flat jumped the tracks. While no wagons were damaged, it caused a delay in unloading. And finally, the following day at Pocatello, Idaho, there was a hail storm that did moderate damage to the tents.

Now there was a turn westward again and the show would spend almost the next five weeks in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. Baker, Ore., 28 and Pendleton 30 were followed by Walla Walla, Wash. Then it was back into Oregon at Portland, June 2-4, followed by Albany, Eugene and Salem. Then came a long Sunday run into Seattle for three days June 9-11. After Tacoma 12 the show ran north for a brief stay in Canada at Vancouver 16-17 and Westminster 18 and then back into the States. At Everett, Wash., 20 it had packed houses as it made its way eastward again to be

in Spokane 22-24. As it now headed through Idaho and Montana and then into Canada to get into the U.S. midwest it had two more packed houses Couer d'Alene and Missoula. At Couer d'Alene a six horse team on a cage bolted during the parade but riders in the wild west unit managed to get hold of the bridles of the team and bring them to a stop. Though the streets were crowded no one was hurt and there was no property damage.

There was no change in the menagerie from 1912 except that the elephant herd now numbered ten, including Kas and Mo. The midway had two side shows. The number two show was a sort of preview of the big show for Dutch Ricardo had an untameable lion act and boxing kangaroos. Tom Moore was the manager. The number one side show, managed this year by J. J. McNulty, was more of a freak show than it had been in previous years. It had Eli Bowen, half man; Princess Victoria, midget; and again our standby Prince Mungo; Prof. Gibson, ventriloquist; Baby Etta, fat girl; Smileless George Wells; Emma, the only two headed girl; Singalese and troupe of dancers; Mlle. Zeno snake and alligator farm; and McSharron's white minstrels. This was a very creditable show for five cents, still the going price. The big show could still be seen for twenty-five cents.

Sells-Floto entered Canada at Fermie, B.C., July 11, followed by Lethbridge, Alta., 12, Medicine Hat 14, Calgary 15-16, Edmonton 18-19, Saskatoon 21, Regina 22 getting to Winnipeg 28-30. At Winnipeg real trouble broke out. During a storm Tuesday night, July 29, five of the elephants broke loose from their stakes in the menagerie tent, overturned and smashed a cage wagon, went into the big top and wreaked havoc with hundreds of reserved chairs, ripped the top, damaged the horse top and allowed some of the horses to get free. They also damaged some of the property of the Happyland grounds, where the show was set

up. According to *The Billboard*, before they were rounded up "the damage was very heavy". For some reason the elephants on the Sells-Floto show more than any other seemed to have made a habit of breaking loose and going on rampages, either singly or in groups.

After leaving Winnipeg the show continued eastward in Canada being in Fort William August 2, Sudbury 4 and making a three day stand in Montreal 12-14 followed by Three Rivers 15 and Quebec 16. At that point getting nearer to the Atlantic than ever before they turned about and headed west again to Ottawa 18, Toronto 21-22, Hamilton 25, London 28, arriving in Windsor 30 just before returning to the U.S. Business had been outstanding in Canada. In Calgary and Edmonton extra seats were erected. After leaving Winnipeg there were only four stands at which "they did not pick up the nut. Of these days only one fell over \$300 short of expenses. But the good days were many and surprisingly good too. For instance Ottawa gave \$5,940 and Quebec \$5,300." *The Billboard* assured that this was not from press releases but straight information. While we don't know what the daily nut was, there were some indications that it was a little under \$4,000. To draw \$5,000 a day at 25 cents admission plus, of course, reserved seat sales, side shows and concessions they would have to have near capacity business at both shows. If this speculation and information is anywhere near the truth we can be sure that Tammen and Bonfils had a very profitable venture.

The show returned to the U.S. at Detroit, Sept., 1-2 followed by Port Huron, Flint, Lansing and Battle Creek that week. The season was now only six weeks from its end with twenty-three weeks completed. The next week brought three dates in Indiana at South Bend, Logansport and Marion followed by three in Ohio, Piqua, Dayton and Hamilton. The twenty-fourth week saw them at Springfield, Columbus and Zanesville, then into West Virginia at Wheeling, Fairmont and Morgantown followed the next week by Clarksburg, Parkersburg and Huntington.

On the way to Huntington at Gallipolis Ferry in the yards, the engine pulling the train jumped the tracks and as a result they were delayed six or seven hours. They did not arrive at Huntington until 2:30 in the afternoon. Although some of the wagons jumped their caulks none left the cars. No one was injured although *The Billboard* stated in its first report, that one was killed and Edward Johnson, Press Agent, was seriously injured. The parade in Huntington did not start until 5:30 and only the evening show was given. The rest of the week was spent in Ohio at Portsmouth, Chillicothe and Washington C.H.

The twenty-sixth week saw the show start its run home. Monday September 29 it was in Louisville followed by Owensboro, Evansville, Ind., Princeton, Paducah, Ky., and Jackson, Tenn. After playing Memphis, Monday October 6 it crossed the Mississippi into Arkansas. It was in Helena 7, Little Rock 10, and arrived in Oklahoma at Muskegee 14 followed by Tulsa 15, Oklahoma City 20 and closed the season at Amarillo 22, the only date in Texas except the second stand of the season at El Paso.



# Baraboo's #85 Cage Wagon



Toy Shop Collection



Milt Robbins Collection

Each and every parade wagon in the vast collection at the Circus World Museum in Baraboo, Wisconsin is blessed with an imposing history except one - #85 cage wagon sometimes called the "picture frame cage".

So much of an orphan was this wagon that the Museum staff could only say its history was obscure.

A photograph has recently come to light that now indicates that the orphan does indeed have a proud ancestry. In fact its lineage makes it one of the rarest wagons in the collection adding two famous circus titles to be represented.

The photograph that exposed the wagon's background came from Milt Robbins whose father Frank A. Robbins operated a fine railroad circus.

Milt remembers the wagon and said when on his Dad's show it was not used as a cage but rather to haul trunks. In parade it was a bandwagon as shown on the photo enclosed.

Milt Robbins further stated that the side panels were decorated with beautiful animal scenes which the show preserved by varnishing them each season.

In the upright section between the two side panels the initials F.R.S. are painted. Milt said that these initials were on the wagon when his father bought it in 1911 from Danny Robinson, owner of the Famous Robinson Shows. "This coincidence of initials made it unnecessary to paint the wagon when it got to our show", said Milt.

The Dec. 2, 1911 issue of Billboard confirms the story of the sale of the Famous Robinson Shows. It also lists Frank A. Robbins as the buyer of many of the wagons which sold for between \$150 to \$300 each. Milt had said his father paid \$200 for this wagon in question.

Milt Robbins further stated that when his father folded his show at the end of the

1915 season that all the wagons were owned by the Erie Lithographing Co. having been mortgaged to them for paper in order to get the show out for 1915.

Erie then sold many of the parade wagons to a movie studio in California, this cage included. Milt supervised their loading and shipping at winterquarters.

As of this writing the whereabouts of this wagon for many years has yet to be determined.

When the elaborate carvings were added to the wagon and who did it is unknown. C.H.S. member Don Francis commented he saw the wagon with the carvings at Jimmie Woods place in Los Angeles. The Disney Studios acquired the wagon and ultimately shipped it to the Circus World Museum.

In many ways this vehicle is unusual. The most obvious feature is the very interesting configuration of the sides, particularly the panels which is apparent when comparing the two photos.

On close observation it can be seen that the wood carved discs on the wheels are identical in the 1913 photo and the one taken at the Museum.

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The foot boards, forged iron supports, brake shoes, brake rod rigging are all identical in both photos.

Most of these features are so designed to be completely different from other parade wagons, thus strengthening the identification.

It would be very helpful if any C.H.S. members would check their photo collections of these two shows. If any additional evidence is uncovered, send copies of the photos to Robert Parkinson, Chief Librarian and Historian of the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin 53913. - C. P. Fox

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# THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL RAILROAD CIRCUS WAS IN 1866.

By Copeland MacAllister

Circus historians have placed the beginning of the railroad circus in America in the year 1872 when W. C. Coup put the Barnum show on rails. (1) (2) (3)

Almost twenty years before this, some show owners had experimented with moving their equipment by rail but the attempts were short lived and apparently unsuccessful as they were not continued. The Railroad Circus and Crystal Amphitheatre was in Detroit Sept. 8-10, 1853. Den Stone's Great Original Railroad Circus was also in Detroit the following year on June 9-10. I suspect that these both might have been the same show. Spaulding and Rogers who were more successful with their Floating Palace also tried their hand with a railroad show in 1856. (4)

In 1868 a circus was framed by Castello, Nixon and Howes which started from Frederick, Md. by rail. After a route west as far as Kansas, they returned to Georgia by the end of November. In 1869 they were on the road west again and with the driving of the golden spike in Utah on May 10, 1869, they continued on to California playing in San Francisco from July 26 through August 21. However during these two years they often operated as a wagon show and left the railroad for short tours to towns not yet served by the rails. In California the show was sold and the partnership was dissolved. (5)

During this period from shortly before to just after the Civil War, a few wagon shows had moved their wagons by railroad back to winter quarters if their season had ended any great distance from home. Occasionally a show might use a railroad to move to greener pastures if business was not good in the locality in which it found itself.

Historians however consider that these experiments were only the prelude to the big show, the great golden age of railroad circuses in America which lasted for nearly a century. They name the Barnum show as the first circus to set the pattern of that which was to come because:

1. It moved all personnel, animals and equipment from one city to the next entirely by railroad.

2. It used a method of loading wagons on specially prepared flatcars by means of inclined ramps at the end of the train with removable connections between the cars which made a continuous roadway for the length of the train.

3. It was successful in that it endured for more than a season or two and thus proved the

practicability of a circus based and operating from railroad trains.

4. Other circuses which followed copied and used the same methods.

## LEWIS B. LENT'S NEW YORK CIRCUS.

Several years ago I came across two con-

## MYERS AND MADIGAN'S RAILROAD CIRCUS.



**FUN AHEAD!**—Myers and Madigan's Railroad and Circus—M'lie Rosa, Principal Equestrienne. Jim Myers, 1st Clown and Local Jester. No broken down wagons or worn out horses. 16 ring horses worth \$16,000 each. Mr. H. Whitby and his two wonderful dancing mares, Gazelle and Coquette.

**THE BAND**, pronounced to be the best that travels, is led by Mr. Joseph Hetherby, a native Pennsylvanian, and acknowledged to have no superior as a leader.

King and La Roux, the Twin Acrobats and celebrated equestrians and Perche Equipoise performers.

The wonder of the age, Master Willie Whitby, only 4 years old, in his principal Equestrian act, constantly elicits rounds of applause.

H. Madigan, the celebrated 2 and 4 horse rider. Jim Myers, the people's favorite, in all his wonderful leaping, equestrian and acrobatic performances, together with songs, jokes, &c.

Mr. W. O'Dell, the great Dramatic Scene rider and Double Somerset performer.

M. Lipman, 2d Clown and corde volante act.

Master James Madigan. This young gentleman, who is every day arriving at the head of his profession, and has excited the wonder and admiration of the leading men in the business, by his wonderful ability as an equestrian and acrobatic performer, will appear in all his graceful and elegant performances.

M'lie Rosa. Language is entirely inadequate to express a correct idea of the style, elegance, and daring of this beautiful girl. To say that she surpasses any other lady rider ever seen in America, is but poor praise, she so far transcends them all. Everywhere her appearance in the ring is greeted with loud applause, and upon retiring from it she carries with her the most enthusiastic expressions of satisfaction and delight.

The Company will exhibit at Harrisburg on Friday and Saturday, the 8th and 9th of Sept'r next.

Doors open at 2 and 7 o'clock, performance commences at 2½ and 7½. Admission 25 cts.

For list of performers and performances, see small and large bills. ag 30-94

secutive dates in 1868 for Lewis B. Lent's New York Circus. At the time, the distance appeared to me to be rather great for a wagon show to travel in one night. I then began to research old newspaper files to reconstruct the routes for this show. Below is a part of the route covering a little over one month in 1866, the first year of the show on the road.

Distances I have shown between cities were measured airline (as the crow flies) from modern automobile roadmaps. The distances over the old roads of over one hundred years ago were certainly much greater.

## L.B. LENT - N.Y. CIRCUS - 1866 ROUTE.

Fri.-Sat. June 15-16, HARTFORD, CONN. (2 days)

Fri. June 22, NEWPORT, R.I.

Sat. June 23, FALL RIVER, MASS. 18 Miles

Mon. June 25-Sat. July 7, BOSTON, MASS.

(2 weeks) 46 Miles

Mon.-Tues. July 9-10, LOWELL, MASS. (2 days) 24 Miles

Wed. July 11, NASHUA, N.H. 12 Miles

Thur. July 12, MANCHESTER, N.H. 15 Miles

Fri. July 13, LAWRENCE, MASS. 24 Miles

Sat. July 14, DOVER, N.H. 38 Miles

Mon.-Tues. July 16-17, PORTLAND, MAINE (2 days) 48 Miles

Wed. July 18, BIDDEFORD, MAINE 15 Miles

Thur. July 19, PORTSMOUTH, N.H. 36 Miles

Fri. July 20, NEWBURYPORT, MASS. 20 Miles

Sat. July 21, SALEM, MASS. 20 Miles

Mon. July 23, GLOUCESTER, MASS. 15 Miles

Tues. July 24, LYNN, MASS. 20 Miles

This was no mudshow. This is obvious from the distances traveled from one date to the next. This had to be a real railroad show and this was six full years before the Barnum show went on rails in 1872.

In researching the routing for the following year I found in the Natick (Mass.) Times for Sept. 7, 1867 that this was "the second annual summer tour by railway" for the Lent show.

## L.B. LENT - N.Y. CIRCUS - 1867 ROUTE.

Tues. May 28, LOWELL, MASS.

Wed. May 29, NASHUA, N.H. 12 Miles

Thur. May 30, MANCHESTER, N.H. 15 Miles

Fri. May 31, LAWRENCE, MASS. 24 Miles

Sat. Aug. 31, NORTHAMPTON, MASS.

Mon. Sept. 2, GREENFIELD, MASS. 19 Miles

This newspaper advertisement appeared in the Harrisburg, Pa., ITEM on September 6, 1854, telling of the coming of MYERS AND MADIGAN'S RAILROAD CIRCUS. A part of the ad says "No broken down wagons or worn out horses." Pfening Collection.



## THE RAILROAD CIRCUS.



Under the management of the celebrated Wit and Original Jester,

## DEN STONE,

A new and novel speculation, in strict accordance with the SPIRIT OF THE TIMES, in which all the elements of ART, NOVELTY AND GRACE, Will be brought into requisition; discarding the old hackneyed routine of equestrian exhibitions, and determined to be as much faster, in the excellence and variety of our performances, as our mode of travel is to the SLOW WAGON AND STEAMBOAT LINE. We will offer to the admirers of the highest order of equestrian performances, in ROCHESTER, on MONDAY, August 28th, 1864. Afternoon and Evening, at Falls Field. Admittance 25 Cents, aug28

THE RAILROAD CIRCUS, under the management of Den Stone was advertised for Rochester, New York on August 28, 1864. Pfening Collection.

Tues. Sept. 3, ATHOL, MASS. 20 Miles  
Mon.-Thur. Sept. 9-12, BOSTON, MASS. (4 days)  
Fri. Sept. 13, NATICK, MASS. 12 Miles  
Thur. Sept. 19, NEW BEDFORD, MASS.  
Fri. Sept. 20, TAUNTON, MASS. 20 Miles  
Sat. Sept. 21, FALL RIVER, MASS. 14 Miles  
Mon. Sept. 23, NEWPORT, R.I. 18 Miles  
Tues. Sept. 24, PROVIDENCE, R.I. 35 Miles  
Wed. Sept. 25, WOONSOCKET, R.I. 14 Miles  
Thur. Sept. 26, WORCHESTER, MASS. 24 Miles  
Fri. Sept. 27, WEBSTER, MASS. 17 Miles  
Sat. Sept. 28, DANIELSON, CONN. 17 Miles  
Mon. Sept. 30, HARTFORD, CONN. 42 Miles  
Tues. Oct. 1, NEW BRITAIN, CONN. 8 Miles  
Wed. Oct. 2, WATERBURY, CONN. 15 Miles  
Thur. Oct. 3, WINSTEAD, CONN. 25 Miles  
Fri. Oct. 4, BIRMINGHAM (Where was this city?)

The previous summer date in Boston could not have been up to expectations as this year (1867) the stay there was only 4 days instead of 2 weeks. This year the show appears to have come into New England twice. At present I have no dates for June, July and August until the last day of August. It is very doubtful that it was here all summer. Perhaps Lent took his show up through Maine and into Canada in 1867.

The advertising for 1868 listed the show as on the "3rd Annual Tour." By this time Lent was beginning to capitalize on the fact that his show was different because it was a railroad show. In the Worcester (Mass.) Evening Gazette for Sat. May 2, 1868 we read the following: "This Company travels entirely by

railroad on special trains chartered for the purpose, and consequently the performers and horses come into the arena fresh and active instead of being jaded and worn down by wearisome night travel over rough roads."

L.B. LENT - N.Y. CIRCUS -  
1868 ROUTE.

Wed. May 20, WEBSTER, MASS.  
Thur. May 21, WORCESTER, MASS. 17 Miles  
Fri. May 22, WOONSOCKET, R.I. 24 Miles  
Sat. May 23, PAWTUCKET, R.I. 12 Miles  
Mon. May 25, Phoenix, R.I. 14 Miles  
Tues.-Wed. May 26-27, PROVIDENCE, R.I. (2 days) 10 Miles

The NEW YORK CIRCUS, owned by L. B. Lent, first used rail cars in 1866. This ad for Newburyport, Mass., June 3, 1867 states "The New York Circus is now in its second annual SUMMER TOUR BY RAILWAY." Pfening Collection.

WAIT for the LARGEST EXHIBITION  
ON EARTH.

## NEW YORK CIRCUS

from the Hippodrome Iron Buildings, Fourteenth Street, New York.

L. B. LENT, DIRECTOR.



Will exhibit at  
NEWBURYPORT  
Monday, June 3d, 1867.

## THIS WELL KNOWN TROUPE.

the reputation of which will be familiar to all who are in the habit of visiting the City of New York, is permanently located during the greater portion of the year at its Colossal Iron Buildings occupying a frontage of one hundred and twenty five feet on Fourteenth Street, opposite the Academy of Music, and is universally acknowledged to surpass in the number and talent of its Artists, the beauty and thorough training of its Performing Horses and Ponies, and the splendor of its Wardrobe and Paraphernalia any similar exhibition ever brought before the American Public. As the position of this celebrated metropolitan establishment as

The Leading Circus of America, is too firmly established to be seriously questioned in any quarter, it is only necessary to state that

THE ENTIRE MAMMOTH COMPANY of the New York establishment will appear at each representation, and that the performance will be found

MORE VARIED and BRILLIANT than anything hitherto witnessed on this side of the Atlantic.

The New York Circus is now on its second annual SUMMER TOUR BY RAILWAY, visiting principal towns only, and is fully endorsed by The Entire Press of New York

## STICKNEY'S RAILROAD CIRCUS!!

FROM NEW YORK,



Will Exhibit at Newburyport  
THURSDAY, May 27th,

Afternoon and Evening.

THE ONLY CIRCUS THAT WILL VISIT  
THIS CITY THIS SUMMER!

NO OUTSIDE PAGEANT.

Our Rivals make Processions,

WE GIVE THE SHOW!

The Best Organized Circus in  
America!

On May 27, 1869 STICKNEY'S  
RAILROAD CIRCUS played in Newburyport, Mass. Pfening Collection.

Thur. May 28, NEWPORT, R.I. 35 Miles  
Fri. May 29, FALL RIVER, MASS. 18 Miles  
Sat. May 30, NEW BEDFORD, MASS. 12 Miles  
Mon.-Sat. June 1-6, BOSTON, MASS. (1 week) 50 Miles  
Tues. June 9, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.  
Thur. June 18, MANCHESTER, N.H.  
Tues. July 7, WORCESTER, MASS. (Return engagement)  
Wed. July 8, FITCHBURG, MASS. 23 Miles  
Thur. July 9, GARDNER, MASS. 9 Miles  
Fri. July 10, ATHOL, MASS. 13 Miles  
Sat. July 11, GREENFIELD, MASS. 20 Miles  
Mon. July 13, KEENE, N.H. 30 Miles  
Tues. July 14, BRATTLEBORO, VT. 16 Miles  
Wed. July 15, BELLOWS FALLS, VT. 20 Miles  
Thur. July 16, CLAREMONT, N.H. 19 Miles

The 1869 show did not parade and the advertising this year stressed the fact that they were a large railroad show and did not parade due to their great size. This brings up the question as to how large this show really was. Note that the quotation above from the Worcester Evening Gazette in 1868 mentions trains (plural) indicating that the show probably moved on at least 30 cars that season. In 1873 the show moved on 60 railroad cars. This was about the same number as the Barnum show of that year.

The band led by Prof. Boswold was usually 25 or more pieces each season indicating a good sized show. When the parade was resumed in 1870, the band rode on the Golden Chariot Bandwagon said to cost \$8,000.00. It was pulled by 24 horses.



## LEWIS B. LENT

Was, during the first half of the season of 1834, agent with June, Titus & Angevine's Menageries, and in August of that year he purchased an interest in I. R. & W. Howe's Menageries, considered one of the best in the country. From 1835 to 1838, inclusive, he was a co-partner of Brown & Lent's Circus, traveling by steamboat on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, and exhibiting chiefly in New Orleans, La., Natchez, Miss., St. Louis, Mo., Louisville, Ky., Cincinnati, Ohio, and Pittsburgh, Pa. From 1839 to 1842, inclusive, he became again associated with June, Titus & Angevine's Menageries and Circuses. In 1843 he became a partner in and manager of Rufus Welch's National Circus, and the following year was co-partner of Sands & Lent's American Circus, exhibiting in England. Returning to America in 1845, he became again a partner in and manager of Rufus Welch's National Circus. During the next three years he was co-partner and manager in three distinct shows, all newly fitted out—Van Amburgh's Menagerie, Sands, Lent & Co.'s American Circus, and June, Titus & Angevine's Menageries and Circus. The season of 1849 he passed in California. The following two years he was again a partner and manager of Rufus Welch's National Circus. In 1852 and 1853 he was partner with Seth B. Howes and P. T. Barnum, and manager of P. T. Barnum's American Museum and Menagerie, exhibiting



LEWIS B. LENT.  
(See Biography.)

among other curiosities, General Tom Thumb and ten elephants. During the next three years he was partner with Rufus Welch in the National Theatre and Circus, Philadelphia, Pa. The show was announced as Welch's

National Circus and L. B. Lent's New York Circus combined. Welch's wagons were painted with vermilion and Lent's Ultramarine blue. From 1857 to 1863, inclusive, he managed L. B. Lent's National Circus. The next three years he was the proprietor and manager of the Equescurriculum, New York Circus, Grizzly Adam's Bears, Ducrow's Trained Bull, Hurdle Buffalo and Troupe of Trained Dogs, Ponies and Monkeys. From 1865 to 1872, inclu-

sive, in the Fall and Winter he managed the New York Circus, in the Hippotheatron, New York City. In 1873 and 1874 he managed the New York Circus, Museum Circus Menagerie. In 1875 he was the railroad-agent of Howes & Cushing's Circus and Menagerie, and the succeeding year he held a like position with J. M. French's Circus and Menagerie. In 1878 he was the managing and railroad-agent of Van Amburgh & Co.'s Menagerie. In 1879 advance director for Adam Forepaugh, and at the end of the season revived the New York Circus at the Globe Theatre, New York. Died, New York, Nov. 29, 1887.

(This biography was condensed from material written for the NEW YORK CLIPPER by Charles H. Day. Furnished by Fred D. Pfening, Jr.)

How does it happen then that a show the size of Lent's has been so overlooked by historians and that credit for the first successful railroad circus has been erroneously given to W. C. Coup and the Barnum show? The answer lies in the book, "Sawdust and Spangles" by W. C. Coup. On Page 61 of my 1961 edition it boldly states that "Previous to 1872 the railroad circus was an unknown quantity." The text then goes on to describe the trials and tribulations of W. C. Coup as he put together his first railroad show in 1872, thus giving the impression that this was the first time it had ever been done.

After we peruse the books on circus history, we find that the authors invariably refer back to "Sawdust and Spangles" as their source of information on the creation of the first successful railroad circus.

Must we then brand Mr. Coup as a prevaricator? My answer to this is "No." Sawdust and Spangles was first published in 1901. Mr. Coup had died in Jacksonville, Fla.,

March 4, 1895. Apparently the book was written by a ghost writer from notes which had been made over the years by Mr. Coup. The error could have been in the translation from the notes to the finished manuscript, in the original notes, or in deliberate falsification by the unknown writer in an effort to give more importance to the book he had planned to publish.

Did Coup originate the so-called circus method of loading flat cars by means of a set of inclined ramps with connecting bridges between the cars? I say no. My grandfather was a Civil War Veteran. As a young boy I spent many hours in the Grand Army Hall in Hyde Park, Mass. On the walls were many pictures of the Civil War. I remember one showing soldiers loading wagons onto flat cars of a train. I am not sure today, about 50 years later, whether the picture was an actual photograph, a line drawing or perhaps a lithograph. But I do recall to mind very well that about 8 or 10

years later when for the first time I watched Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey loading their wagons that I thought to myself that that was the way the army did it back in the Civil War. The old G.A.R. hall in Hyde Park is long since gone but whenever I look through Civil War pictures I hope to find that print again. There certainly must have been many Civil War veterans on the Lent show of 1866.

From a practical point of view, the Lent Show must have used this method of loading. In 90 years of circus railroading, this is the only method I know of that was ever used. Even the highly technical automobile industry of today uses the same basic method of loading cars for shipment by railroad. It is the only logical way. How else could it be done?

What happened to L.B. Lent's N.Y. Circus after nine years on the rails and after its final season in 1874? I cannot prove it yet but I suspect it was sold to Adam Forepaugh and that in 1875, the Forepaugh show after ten years as a mudshow, went out for the first time as a railroad show using L.B. Lent's equipment. We do know that Lewis B. Lent did become a manager or agent on the Forepaugh Circus. (2)

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- (1) The Circus from Rome to Ringling, Earl Chapin May.
- (2) Mudshows and Railers, Stuart Thayer
- (3) A History of the Circus In America, George L. Chindahl
- (4) Ibid.
- (5) Ibid.

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*I continue to do more research on Lewis B. Lent and his New York Circus. Any information or suggestions from fellow C.H.S. members will be most appreciated. Even one date and location could prove to be a missing link.*

*Thanks are made here publicly to the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Mass. for the use of their superb old newspaper files. Without them this article would not have been possible. Thanks are also extended for the use of the microfilm files in the public libraries of Arlington, Framingham, Natick and Waltham, Mass. Finally, my thanks to my good friend and fellow C.H.S. member Robert Kitchen who made a tabulation from newspaper files of circuses visiting Fall River, Mass. during the 1800's. His tabulation started me on this research.*

### WANTED BANDWAGON BACK ISSUES

Any issues prior to  
Jan.-Feb. 1966  
Advise Price  
(Also wish to buy lithographs)  
Don Nieman  
Box 5  
Columbus, Ohio 43230



# THE RAY W. ROGERS CIRCUSES

By Joseph T. Bradbury

## Part VIII Wallace Bros. 1944, Subsequent Developments, The York Quarters, Conclusion

### The 1944 Season

After two years of wartime operation the nation's circus owners had learned to live with the situation and reap sizeable profits. The early days of uncertainty were gone. They knew the drawbacks, the shortages of personnel, gas rationing, scarce materials, numerous federal tax regulations and restrictions but they also knew that more money was being made in the circus business now than at any time since the pre-depression days of the late 20's. Contrary to the quiet that had generally descended over the circus world the past two winters things were now popping fast and furious in the early months of 1944.

Ringling-Barnum planned to restore its menagerie and return to its regular complement of railroad cars. Clyde Beatty teamed up with Art Concello and his Russell Bros. Circus which would go out under the new title of Clyde Beatty and Russell Bros. Combined. Norma Rogers also signed to go with that show in 1944. Ben Davenport decided to put his Dailey Bros. Circus on ten railroad cars thus giving the nation a total of three railers, largest number since 1938. Cole Bros. would again be on 25 cars.

Ray Rogers decided his health still would not permit him to actively manage Wallace Bros. in 1944 and he planned to continue to tour with Baron Novak, his step-son, booking the popular midget into theaters, clubs, various celebrations, and other events. In January Rogers and Baron played a ten day engagement in Montgomery, Ala. and enroute visited Baron's brother, Joe, who was a student at Georgia Military College in Milledgeville.

Rogers, however, wanted to divest himself of the financial responsibility of the show so he made an outright lease of the title and properties to Jack A. Fox, who had served as the 1943 manager for Rogers, and had been more or less the No. 2 man around the show for many seasons holding the major privileges.

Details of the lease agreement with Fox are lacking but in all probability Rogers was to receive a percentage of the profits. Some have claimed Fox headed a group of seven employees who operated the show on a common-wealth basis. In any event Fox was in complete charge. A letter in the author's file from Fox to the late E. W. Adams who was seeking employment with the show in 1944 confirms this and CHS Bud Sims who was at the York quarters and later went out with the show says there is no doubt that Fox was the head man on the show that season. What arrangements were made between the individual members of the commonwealth likewise is not known to the author. Helene Rogers Hartzell has mentioned there was considerable bickering among the "seven" during this season and she is of the opinion this was a primary cause for its lack of success. Others close to the scene did not term this a contributing factor. The deal between Rogers and Fox was made early in the year and plans were laid that would see the 1944 Wallace show emerge in April as one of the largest shows - physically ever to come out of the York quarters.

The Jan. 22, 1944 *Billboard* had an advertisement from Wallace Bros. Circus wanting — "Big Show acts, sideshow acts, billers, musicians, boss canvasman, property man, elephant trainer, and working men in all departments etc."

A notation in the Under The Marquee column of the Feb. 19, 1944 *Billboard* said that

**Photo No. 1 - Wallace Bros. on lot at Allentown, Pa., June 7-8, 1944. Photo by Bob Good.**

Jimmy Foster had recently visited the Wallace quarters in York and reported there was much activity. It was a busy place and the following issue said that the Wallace No. 1 advertising car had been rebuilt with four high berths that would accommodate a crew of 14 billers, 1 apprentice, and manager, Jack Grady. Other notes said that Tex Sherman would have the press department and that all new art and ad mats were being prepared by him. On the advance all pickup style trucks were being abandoned and would be replaced by new panel trucks and station wagons. Dory Miller would help with the show's routing but did not plan to be active ahead of it.

The quarters' shops gave all of the vehicles an entirely new paint scheme for 1944. The traditional red was not used but instead the trucks were painted yellow with lettering in black. Many trucks had the title "Wallace Bros." in rather small lettering but the word "Circus" in huge block letters running completely across the sides. Some with the show when the changeover was made said the new color scheme was "carnie" to fit Jack Fox who was considered by many to be more carnival than circus minded. Fox did have a sizeable concession business scattered around on several carnivals throughout the years, however, he was definitely circus minded, having put in so many years with Rogers on the Barnett and Wallace shows.

Photos of the motor equipment in 1944 as well as other wartime years indicate the show was using more "homemade" type semis and truck bodies, most of them of wooden construction built in the quarters shops. Sheet metal was scarce making it necessary to use wood. New commercial vehicles were practically impossible to obtain since the manufacturers were tied down with war contracts. It was reported that two semis were acquired from the DeLang Shows (Carnival) and used by Wallace in 1944. Although generally the Wallace motor equipment of 1943 and 1944 especially didn't look as fine as that of the late







**Photo No. 2 - Wallace Bros. sideshow bannerline, Allentown, Pa., June 7-8, 1944. Photo by Bob Good.**

30's when much of it was from commercial dealers modified or custom built for show use the trucks were still able to load the show adequately, looked acceptable on the lot and highway, and moved on time.

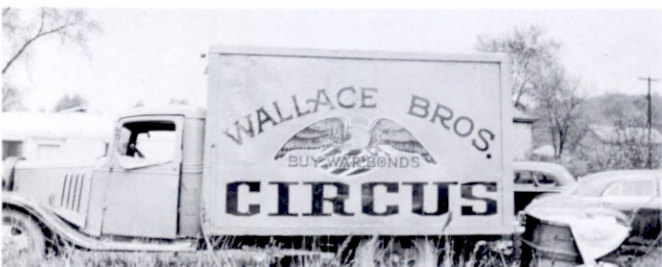
In early April Rogers told *The Billboard* that his elephant, "Junie", the first one he ever owned, had recently died. He said he had her rented to Bob Atterbury and the cold weather in the north where she was working had caused her death. Rogers mentioned the elephant was 20 years old and was only four feet high when he got her in 1928. This loss reduced the herd to seven. Alice was again leased to Beers-Barnes and Frieda to Sello Bros. leaving only the five ex-Downie elephants to go with the 1944 Wallace Bros. Circus. They were Babe, Cora, Inez, Marion, and Addie and worked wonderfully as a performing group.

Although the show again used a menagerie tent in 1944 there were no show owned cages carried. A new spread of canvas was acquired and the entire layout looked extremely pleasing when Wallace Bros. opened the 1944 season in York, S.C. on April 12.

As customary, following the opening, the show moved across North Carolina headed toward West Virginia. At Hickory, N.C. a visitor reported the show had fine weather and capacity crowds and further that the canvas was all new and the equipment looked great.

The May 6, 1944 *Billboard* later noted that business in Hickory was double that of 1943 and that Welch, W. Va. had capacity at night. Tex Sherman was reported to be doing well with the newspaper publicity. Mr. and Mrs.

**Photo No. 4 - Wallace Bros. truck with "Buy War Bonds" decoration, season of 1944. Pfening Collection.**



**Photo No. 3 - Red Lunceford's wild west lineup on Wallace Bros. lot at Allentown, Pa., June 7-8, 1944. Photo by Bob Good.**

missed, due to an all day rain and bad lot. A daily appeal for workers appears in the newspapers along the route and it was noted that with the help of towners the afternoon performances start near the scheduled hours. Since joining as general manager Ralph J. Clawson had made several changes and ironed out "waits" in the performance.

The 1944 Wallace Bros. Program was listed as follows:

1. Tournament, led by Flo McIntosh on horseback carrying an American flag, all performers and stock participating.
2. Comedy acrobats, Corriell and Gallagher Duo in Ring 1; Gallagher kids, Ring 3.
3. Single trapeze, Biggerstaff in Ring 1; The Lakes, double trapeze, Ring 2.
4. Capt. Engerer's lions in steel arena in front of grandstand. Well executed routine, closing with a fast novelty with all cats in action to heavy applause.
5. Aerial ballet; Vivian White in Ring 1 in demonstration of endurance.
6. Rooney's football mule on track.
7. Clown walkaround.
8. Six liberty horses, presented by Joan Randall.
9. Trained dogs, Miss Rooney in Ring 2; Juggling, The Gallaghers in Ring 1; Juggling, The Coriells in Ring 3.
10. First concert announcement, introducing Red Lunceford.
11. Tight wire acts, Ring 1, Three Zorrinos; Ring 3, Mrs. Rooney.
12. Single elephants, Ring 1, Marion Jordan; Ring 2, Miss Diviney; Ring 3, Gladys Fox.

**Photo No. 5 - Wallace Bros.' five elephants on lot, season of 1944. Pfening Collection.**





13. Clowns.
14. Iron Jaw, Ring 1, Miss Jordan; Ring 2, Sylvian; Ring 3, Vivian White.
15. Head balancing, Ring 1, Corriell and Gallagher; Ring 3, Tommy Ross, acrobatic balancing.
16. Romig-Rooney Riding Act, 7 people and 3 head stock, well executed routine with Master Rooney doing well with the comedy.
17. Aftershow introductions.
18. Rogers elephants (5) with John Pugh in charge, presented by Flo McIntosh, a number with much speed, closing with walking elephant number on track. (Long Mount)
19. Coriell-Gallagher acrobatic turn in center ring. Seven Gallagher Kids in a fast routine of risley and teeterboard and closing with handsprings. Mike Ross assisted.
20. Menage. Seven young women presenting gaited horses. Flo Randall doing the flare ups with her steed in front of the grandstand.
21. Clowns.
22. Coriell in head slide.
23. Clowns.
24. Flying Hartzell's, Johnny Hartzell's newest aerial creation. (The Jim Fu Wire Troupe is expected to join in a few days)

The 1944 staff was as follows: Ralph J. Clawson, general manager; Jack Fox, executive manager; Dory Miller, general agent; Tex Sherman, contracting press; Cliff McDougall, press; Jack Grady, in charge of advance; Tom Buchanan, legal dept.; "Specs" Cautin, supt. of tickets; Dave and Deacon McIntosh, Walter Rogers, George Enos, mechanical dept.; Walter Harne, manager sideshow; Oscar Wiley, 24 hr. man; Mike Guy, bandleader; Red Luncford, equestrian director.

Sideshow lineup had Walter Harne, manager; Minstrels with Harry Brown's 8 piece negro band and 6 girls; Larry Benner, punch, magic, and inside lecturer; Cle, mentalist; Capt. Elsur, tattooed man; Geraldine-Gerald (half and half). Annex, dancing girls.

The wild west concert included Red, Irene, and Richard Luncford, Elmer Davis, and Coy Lee.

Clown alley had Charles LaBird, Lew Hershey, Henry Crowell, and Art Lind.

At full strength Mike Guy's band had 10 pieces. Opening spec march was "Our Director".

Leaving Ohio the show entered Penn-

**Photo No. 6 - Wallace Bros. on lot at Rutland, Vt., July 22, 1944. Big top is in background. Pfening Collection.**



**Photo No. 9 - Ralph Clawson, manager of Wallace Bros. Circus, Allentown, Pa. June 7-8, 1944. Photo by Bob Good.**

sylvania with first stand coming at Sharon, May 4. On May 10 CHS Mike Piccolo visited and wrote in the Bandwagon giving his impressions of the show on the lot at Uniontown. He confirmed the tent sizes listed in the *Billboard* review and noted that the show got 8th and 9th grade boys from a junior high school to help in setting up. Such practice was common all thru the 1944 season when labor was so scarce.

Wallace was at McKeesport, Pa. May 11, followed by Monessen and Connellsville and then went into Maryland to play Cumberland, Hagerstown, and Chambersburg. Going back into Pennsylvania the circus was at Pottstown, May 20 where three shows were given and at Lancaster, May 22, it took four performances to accommodate the vast crowds. *The Billboard* noted the show was truly packing them in during the Keystone state tour.

Wallace moved over into New Jersey for a two day stand at Camden, May 24-25. While in Camden Tom Parkinson was a visitor. He recalls his visit in part as follows.

"In 1944 I was in the army at Ft. Dix and caught Wallace Bros. at Camden, N.J. on a dirty, cinder lot in the rain and mud. It was a dismal day. There were 28 yellow and black

trucks, 5 elephants, Capt. Engerer's truck with his 5 lions and 2 dogs but no show owned cages. J. A. Fox was around as was Ralph Clawson. I understood then that Ray Rogers was not with the show that season due to his illness."

Returning to Pennsylvania the show played Reading, Pottsville, Shamokin, Shenandoah, Hazleton, Tomaque, two days in Allentown, June 7-8, Bethlehem, then it was back into New Jersey with first date at Somerville, June 10.

The June 10, 1944 *Billboard* carried a Wallace want ad in which the show was seeking a boss canvasman for the big top, seat men, elephant men, ticket sellers, and general "hard workers". Best of treatment and a long season were promised. Additional ads appeared in the following issue wanting two first class rosin back horses.

A general report in the June 10 *Billboard* said the highlights of the Wallace performance were Capt. Engerer's fighting lion act, the Gallagher Troupe of child acrobats, and the Romig-Rooney riding act. The clown contingent was up to ten and headed by Lew A. Ward. Toby Tyler, veteran clown, was expected to join soon. The article said that property and menagerie men were in neat uniforms of red and green and candy butchers worked in spotless white. Ralph Clawson said the show was short of workmen but it was moving along okay. He pointed out a 60 mile jump was made to Somerville in a terrific rain but show was up and ready to go by twelve noon. H. Kahley joined as a 24 hr. man.

After New Jersey the show made a quick swing thru New York playing Middleton on June 14 and soon entered Massachusetts where it was at Pittsfield on June 20 followed by Greenfield, Northampton, Holyoke, and Southbridge. Wallace played Newport, R.I. June 28 and on July 4 was at Framingham, Mass. where it was visited by CHS John J. Crowley who sent in a report to *The Bandwagon* containing these interesting notations.

"The menagerie consisted of 5 elephants, 2 camels, 10 high school and liberty horses, 1 resin back horse, 4 ponies, 1 donkey, 1 mule, all of which are owned by Wallace Bros. Additional animals include 3 of Red Luncford's horses used in the wild west concert; 1 Coy Lee Wild West horse, 3 Romig-Rooney rosinback horses, together with their 6 trained dogs. Capt. Engerer had 5 lions and 2 dogs. The show moves on a total of 86 vehicles which

**Photo No. 7 - Wallace Bros. on lot at Rutland, Vt. July 22, 1944. In foreground is light plant semi and big top. Pfening Collection.**







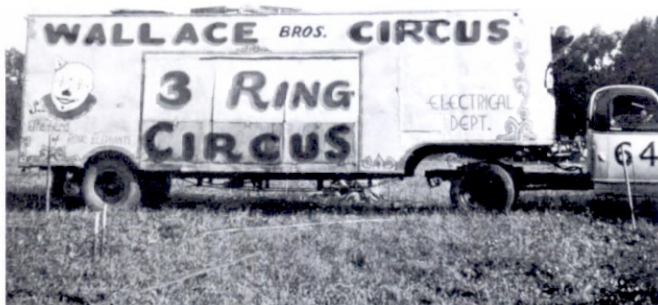
**Photo No. 10 - Capt. Ernest Engerer, wild animal trainer, on Wallace Bros. lot, Allentown, Pa. June 7-8, 1944. Note false left arm and hand. Photo by Bob Good.**

includes privately owned cars, trucks, and trailers."

The show next played Waltham, Mass. and was at Lynn on July 6, which was the date the big top of Ringling-Barnum was destroyed by fire in Hartford, Conn. leaving a frightful toll of dead and injured. The shock of this fire resulted in a swift reaction and crackdown on other canvas shows on the road, especially those in the general area such as Wallace Bros. The blow came from federal, state, and local officials who were determined to prevent any such recurrence. Their zeal and often unreasonable conduct put canvas shows in for a severe period of constant hounding from all levels of government to meet "safety standards". Wallace Bros. in New England at the time was a prime target of this reaction and the next few weeks of tramping were tough.

The route continued on thru Massachusetts with stands at Lowell, Newburyport, and Lawrence. Next the show moved into New Hampshire with first date at Concord, July 14. Both Bailey Bros. and Wallace Bros. cancelled

**Photo No. 8 - Semi No. 64, light plant, on Wallace Bros. lot at Syracuse, N.Y., July 28, 1944. Pfening Collection.**



**Photo No. 11 - The Gallagher Family on Wallace Bros. lot at Allentown, Pa. June 7-8, 1944. The young lady topmounter grew up and later performed under name of Galla Shawn. Photo by Bob Good.**

Keene, N.H. probably over local fire regulations. After Berlin, N.H. the show went into Vermont playing stands at Rutland, St. Johnsbury, Montpelier, Burlington, and St. Albans and then moved on into New York.

About this time Ray Rogers who was in Canada with his wife and Baron Novak playing a series of indoor dates with the Hamid-Morton Circus became ill and had to return to his Rock Hill, S.C. home. Reports said that he had suffered a heart attack but evidently it wasn't too serious, however the July 22, 1944 *Billboard* said that Rogers had another attack and was now in a Charlotte, N.C. hospital.

The Wallace show really had a hectic time in Schenectady, N.Y. It arrived on Sunday, July 23 for performances scheduled for the next two days. The big top was raised and all set but local officials stepped in and said the show could not use the tent. This meant tearing down the seats, lowering the top and packing it away. Seats were again placed and side-wall erected. Four performances were given out in the open. During an evening show Mrs. Dacy Deviney, equestrienne, was thrown from her horse and taken to the hospital but fortunately



**Photo No. 12 - Dacy Diviney and elephant on Wallace Bros. lot, season of 1944. Pfening Collection.**

she was not seriously injured and rejoined the show in two days. Quite a bit of painting of the equipment took place over the weekend in Schenectady and it was announced Ed Hearney was now in charge of the menagerie.

The big top was not permitted to be used at Utica but four performances were given under normal conditions at the two day stand at Syracuse, July 28-29.

In the meantime Bailey Bros., owned by Robert "Big Bob" Stevens, had been crossing paths with Wallace Bros. for a number of weeks in New England and the opposition also spilled over into New York. The two shows got into a real oldtime billing war at Rome, N.Y. as they played within a few days of each other. Wallace had also followed very closely Bailey into Rutland, Vt.

At Rochester, N.Y. July 31-August 1 the local fire chief would not let the Wallace big top be used but in Buffalo during the three day Engagement August 2-3-4 it was erected after being fireproofed during the first day. The Buffalo fire chief told the press that the show on the lot was well protected and that any

**Photo No. 13 - Wallace Bros. ticket and office semi on a rainy lot at Camden, N.J., May 24-25, 1944. Photo by Tom Parkinson.**





grounds for alarm or fear of the public had been reduced to an absolute minimum. He said the big top canvas was fireproofed, a no smoking order was enforced on the entire Bailey Avenue show grounds, all 18 exit aisles were cleared and constantly attended by police, no surplus hay was allowed in the menagerie or big top and the show's generator plant, along with the sideshow and concession booths with inflammable tops were removed a considerable distance from the big top. Also Engine 18 with a full crew of four hose lines covering every portion of the grounds was on the scene. Although as unusual as such extreme measures may sound viewed in light of current fire safety measures on circus lots today such practices were common during the first few weeks that proceeded the tragic Ringling-Barnum fire.

Clawson told *The Billboard* that Buffalo attendance had been affected by a record heat wave, a polio epidemic, and the hangover from the Hartford fire. Polio, a real menace to circus business in those days, was now quite widespread throughout many eastern states and especially from New York to Virginia. Clawson said matinee crowds in Buffalo were slim but night business good.

The August 12, 1944 *Billboard* in commenting on other recent Wallace activities in New York State said that Flo McIntosh was breaking a new bareback riding act (same issue had an advertisement for a horse), the show had augmented the main elephant number with four ballet girls, Verne Carriell's all girl acrobatic act was making a fine showing, and Georgie Lake received flowers after his act. Mrs. Amelia Lake was back in the program after illness and was doing an iron jaw number with Sylvia Forrest and Floyd Lake was doubling as a trapeze performer and boss rigger. Other performance notes said The Lakes double trapeze number was one of the fastest in the business and the Gallagher kids go over big with their tumbling act.

Jamestown, August 5, was the final New York stand and the show next went into Pennsylvania playing stands at Oil City, Kittanning, and Greensburg. Plans were to head south fast through West Virginia and then on toward the Virginia coast. First indication of real polio trouble came when the show told *The Billboard* it had cancelled its scheduled August 22 date in Newport News, Va. on account of the dread disease. Entering West Virginia at Morgantown, August 10, the show found the polio situation there hurting attendance and the same was true at Fairmont the next day.

Following the stand at Clarksburg, W. Va. on August 12 it was decided to cancel the remainder of the contracted dates in the polio territory of West Virginia and Virginia and return to York quarters. The Sept. 2, 1944 *Billboard* said the show's closing was only temporary and it would reopen September 5 with many acts retained to play four week-long engagements in outdoor stadiums.

Rogers, who had recovered nicely from his recent illness, worked with Howard Y. Bary in setting up the stadium dates which would be under police auspices with show billed with title of Police Circus as was customary at the time. The lease of the title and equipment to



**Photo No. 14 - Wallace Bros. trucks on lot at Camden, N.J., May 24-25, 1944. No. 20 semi, horses, is in foreground. Photo by Tom Parkinson.**

Jack Fox was terminated. As mentioned before Helene Rogers Hartzell said there was considerable bickering going on between the seven comprising the commonwealth headed by Fox and she is of opinion this was a primary cause of the downfall. Others feel, even so, had it not been for the polio situation the show could have continued and ended up the season a winner despite the problems caused after the Hartford fire.

Rogers retained Mike Guy's band and a number of key acts for the Police Circus deal. Other performers were engaged including aerialist, Don Dorsey. The Police dates were all in outdoor stadiums with first coming at Richmond, Va., followed by Newport News, Portsmouth, and Norfolk. No reports came in the trade publications concerning the business done at these stands but the polio situation in the area and subsided and in all probability the take was okay.

On October 12, 1944 Rogers sold the Wallace Bros. equipment and animals to Clyde Beatty. The sale was finalized in Dallas, Texas and in attendance were Ray Rogers, Clyde Beatty, Ralph J. Clawson, and Sterling (Duke) Drukenbrod, a personal representative of Beatty. The Wallace title was not involved, nor was the York quarters, however it was agreed that Beatty could use the quarters where the

**Photo No. 15 - Semi No. 50 on Wallace Bros. lot at Camden, N.J., May 24-25, 1944. Photo by Tom Parkinson.**



equipment was now located to get the show ready for the 1945 season.

Walter Rogers recently said he did not know the exact amount his father received from the sale of the equipment and animals but did recall there was an initial down payment of \$5,000.00 with remainder to be paid during the 1945 season. Helene Rogers Hartzell thinks the total amount was \$60,000.00 which should be about right based on values at that time. Walter said that just prior to the sale of the show to Beatty his father had made the same deal to the Cristiani Family who although interested were reluctant to go into show ownership for themselves at that time. Beatty's financial backer in the transaction was Frank J. Walter of Houston, Texas. Beatty was quoted in the Nov. 4, 1944 *Billboard* saying he would retain quarters in York, S.C. this winter but following the 1945 season he would establish new winterquarters in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. in conjunction with his Jungle Zoo. (A move incidentally he never made). Title for his show would be Clyde Beatty's Wild Animal Circus and he said he would announce his staff, department heads, and detailed plans later. Beatty finished out the 1944 season with the Clyde Beatty-Russell Bros. Circus at Longview, Texas, October 30 and shortly thereafter headed for York.

Rogers and Howard Y. Bary promoted a major circus date in Mexico City using the National Bullfight Arena for an engagement in December 1944. Title of the show was Grand American Circus and Helene Rogers Hartzell said it was one of the largest shows to ever go from the states to play in Mexico. Clyde Beatty's wild animal act was a mainstay of the performance. The Flying Hartzells and other prominent stateside acts were also present.



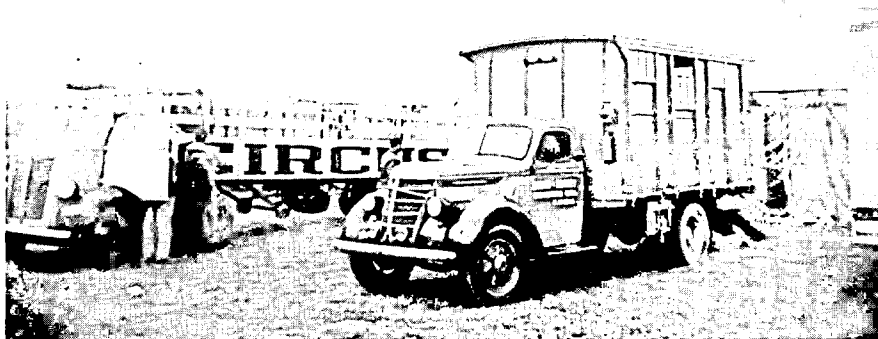
While there Beatty signed a number of Mexican acts for his 1945 show. The show was a tremendous success and Helene says it played to 38,000 one day. As fate would have it this Mexico City winter circus date would be the last circus Ray Rogers would ever be personally involved with.

Rogers, however, had planned to be active in various circus promotions in 1945 and the Feb. 3, 1945 *Billboard* said he and Howard Y. Bary were lining up Police Circus dates in Portsmouth, Newport News, Richmond, Baltimore, Washington, and Pennsylvania stands at York, Harrisburg, Wilkes-Barre, and Scranton. Only two weeks later Rogers was reported ill again in a Charlotte, N.C. hospital. He was up and about again shortly but retired from any and all active circus matters.

The new Clyde Beatty Wild Animal Circus opened at Rock Hill, S.C. on April 7, 1945 and it was a happy time for the celebrated wild animal trainer who at least had his dream of owning his own shown fulfilled, but the occasion was saddened when after the matinee, Rogers, who was on the lot to take in the opening suffered a major heart attack and was rushed to the York County Hospital where his condition was described as serious.

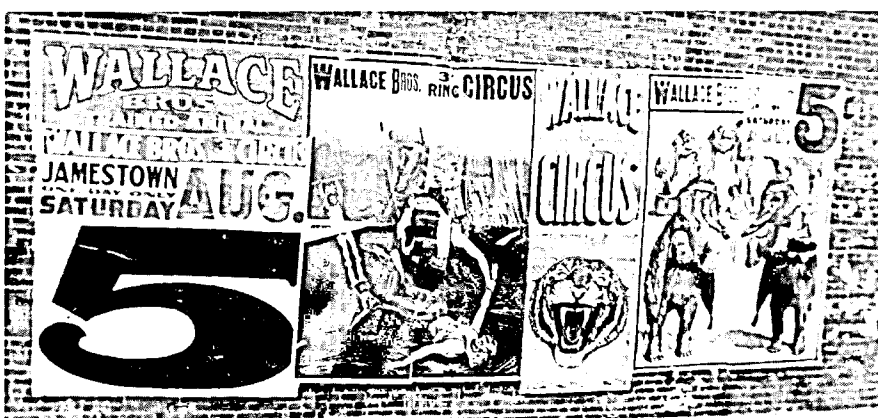
Rogers remained in a delicate condition for the next few months and did not venture far from his home in Rock Hill until late August when he journeyed to Milledgeville, Ga. to attend the graduation with honors of his stepson Joseph George Novak Jr. from Georgia Military College. He was accompanied by his wife and Baron Novak, midget brother of the cadet. Paul Conway and family came up from Macon for the occasion. Cadet Novak said he was next going into the college proper to study engineering with aviation on the side and indicated there would be no circus career ahead for him.

In early September 1945 Rogers leased the Barnett Bros. title to the Bradley & Benson Circus for the remainder of the season. As soon as the Barnett route and various advertisements appeared in *The Billboard* speculation arose as to what part Rogers himself was playing in the show. Even William Hamilton, Rogers' one time partner who had been quiet for many years, came to light and was quoted in the trade publications that the Barnett Bros. circus was returning to the road. Rogers, however, soon placed a call to *The Billboard* offices to set straight the story. He was in no way connected with the show with exception of leasing the title to Bradley & Benson. That show played York, S.C. on Sept. 10 and in all probability picked up what excess Barnett Bros. billing paper was in storage at the old quarters. The show was owned by Clarence Walters, Ernie White, and Jimmy Bagwell. They placed ads in *The Billboard* wanting performers, working men, sideshow acts, and people previously with Barnett Bros. Those interested were advised to contact the Barnett Bros. Circus at a post office box in York. This "new" Barnett show moved into traditional "old" Barnett Bros. territory with stands in North Carolina at Gastonia, Kanapolis, Ashboro, Thomasville, Mooresville, and Shelby but became so plagued with opposition from Austin Bros. Circus, 10 car rail show, it moved out of the area quickly and



**Photo No. 16 - Trucks on Wallace Bros. lot at Camden, N.J., May 24-25, 1944. On right is vehicle used to transport the Romig-Rooney riding act. Photo by Tom Parkinson.**

in North Carolina by immediately switching Austin's route into several spots just ahead of Barnett. The competition from the railroad show was too stiff for the smaller motorized Barnett show so it headed for other parts. The Oct. 20, 1945 *Billboard* said that Barnett had



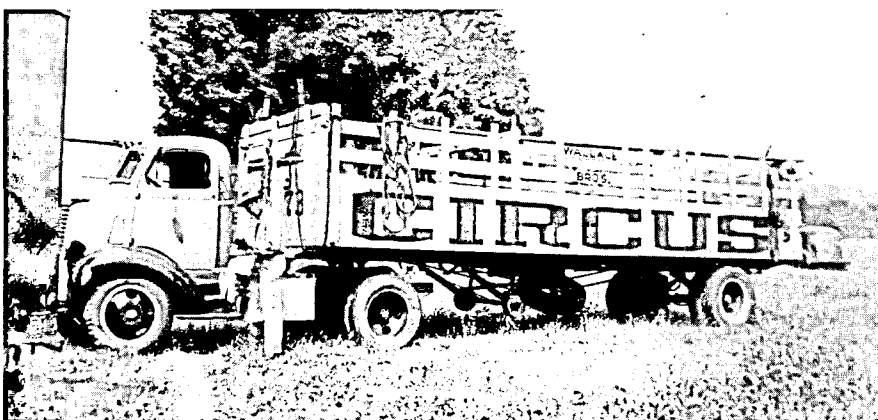
after South Carolina dates at Clinton, Piedmont, and Abbeville, went into Georgia Sept. 24 at Winder and across the state to Alabama.

Several reports on the Barnett Bros. Circus appeared in *The Billboard*. Bernie Fowler, the show's contracting agent left and jumped to Austin Bros. with Al Humke replacing him in that job. It was Fowler who played the villain

**Photo No. 17 - Wallace Bros. billing stand for Jamestown, N.Y., Aug. 5, 1944. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)**

recently made a 321 mile jump into more new territory moving from Tallapoosa, Ga. to Jackson, Tenn. and lost only one playing day enroute. The report further said the show had stored its 170 x 16 ft. canopy in Chattanooga and was now using an 80 ft. round with two 30's big top. Capt. Engerer and his trained

**Photo No. 18 - Wallace Bros. semi No. 73, season of 1944. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)**







lions to join Bailey Bros. and several of the smaller acts left because of the long jump northward into Tennessee from Georgia. It was said the performance ran one hour and 15 minutes. By the end of October contracting agent, Al Humke, was reported in Chicago

**Photo No. 19 - Wallace Bros. semi No. 46, horses, season of 1944. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)**

A number of former Rogers employees and/or performers were with the Bradley &



**Photo No. 20 - Wallace Bros. semi No. 63, season of 1944. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)**

indicating the show had closed for the season. With the close of this show in the fall of 1945 the Barnett Bros. title has not been used since unless conceivably for short periods of time with pirated use such as has happened to practically every show title in existence. Officially, the Barnett Bros. title has not been used since then.

Benson, later Barnett Bros. Circus in 1945, including Mrs. Tom Mix who had the wild west aftershow, Capt. Engerer and his lions, and Scratchy Jack Neville who joined as boss canvasman after leaving Bailey Bros.

On Oct. 22, 1945 Rogers suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and was returned to the York County Hospital in very critical condition. His

**Photo No. 21 - Wallace Bros. sleeper semi No. 57, season of 1944. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)**



daughters Helene, Norma, and Connie, and son, Walter, all left their respective shows to come to his bedside as death seemed imminent. However, he did recover temporarily but was never active again. Sometime before his latest major illness or possibly thereafter before his death the next spring, Rogers sold the elephant Alice to Beers-Barnes where she had been leased for several seasons and Frieda was sold to James M. Cole to be used on his new motorized circus in 1946. It is believed these two elephants were not involved in the sale to Beatty the previous October and the only ones he got were the five which were on the 1944 show — Babe, Cora, Inez, Marion, and Addie. These along with Beatty's other three elephants, Mary, Sidney, and Anna May gave him a top notch herd of 8 with his 1945 show.

Death came to Ray W. Rogers on April 13, 1946 when he suffered another heart attack at his home in Rock Hill, S.C. The April 27, 1946 *Billboard* ran the following obituary.

#### **"FINAL TRIBUTE TO RAY ROGERS"**

"York, S.C. April 20 - Circus folk, state and local officials, bankers, professional men and townspeople joined in paying homage here Monday (15) to the memory of Ray W. Rogers, retired circus owner, who died at his home in Rock Hill, S.C. April 13.

"Funeral services were conducted at the York Funeral Home by Rev. Malcolm P. Calhoun, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, York, and Rev. J.C. Roper, pastor of the Trinity Methodist Church, York. Burial followed in York Cemetery with full Masonic honors.

"Sunday the body lay in state in Rock Hill and Monday in York the two cities where Rogers had spent much time during the last several years.

"Telegrams and other messages of condolence came to the widow, Mrs. Emma N. Rogers, from every part of the nation as well as Canada and Mexico. There was a profusion of floral offerings.

"A host of friends from the Sparks Circus, then in Charlotte, N.C. visited Sunday and many attended the Monday afternoon services. Others came from troupes widely scattered over the country.

"Among those at the funeral were Mr. and Mrs. Ralph J. Clawson, George Penny, Thomas McMahon, and Mr. and Mrs. Ray Goody and daughter from the Sparks Circus; Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Tumber, of the James M. Cole Circus; Ralph (Specs) Cautin, Cavalcade of Amusements; Alex and David McIntosh, Mr. and Mrs. Ted Lewis, LaBird brothers, all of York and Paul M. Conway of Macon, Ga.

"Walter Rogers, son of the deceased, is off the road this season and was in York at the time of the death. Ray Goody cancelled his performance of his wire act and foot slide for the Sparks matinee show, to attend the rites. He was a nephew of Rogers." (Note, Goody's real name was Ryerson Gaudet and he worked under that name as a wire walker before later taking the professional name of Ray Goody)

After Rogers' death the former quarters in York were sold and today (1975) it is the site of the York Lumber Company. All miscellaneous circus equipment was sold, however as late as December 1950 the estate still had not disposed of the Wallace and Barnett titles. The follow-



ing advertisement appeared in the Dec. 30, 1950 *Billboard*.

"FOR SALE: Wallace Bros. Circus, Title, Franchises, Good Will etc. One of America's Best Liked and Best Remembered Shows, the circus which had such features as Hoot Gibson, Tom Tyler, William Desmond, Harry Carey, and year after year played a proven route throughout the East, Midwest, and South, leaving an unsullied reputation and always welcomed. Still Fresh in the Minds of Millions.

"Also we offer for sale the title, good will etc. of BARNETT BROS. CIRCUS, for many years one of America's leading motorized shows. A superb draw in Eastern Canada too. Prompt action imperative, so please make best offer in first letter or wire. These titles are to be sold to close an estate. All address John G. Barron, Trust Officer, The Peoples National Bank, Rock Hill, S.C. Executor of the estate of Ray W. Rogers, Deceased."

In 1952 Ben Davenport used the Wallace Bros. title on his motorized circus all season long and from mid-season 1953 after his split with Tony Diano in operation of Diano Bros. Circus he continued under the Wallace banner. What arrangements, if any, Davenport made with the Rogers estate for use of the title is not known to the author. Davenport's son-in-law, Pete Cristiani, put the Wallace Bros. Bros. title on his show in 1961, and in 1962 and for the next few years the title was Cristiani Bros. and Wallace Bros. Combined Circus. The 1966 season saw the last use of the combined Cristiani-Wallace title.

Since 1945 no use has been made of the Barnett Bros. title and Walter Rogers says it is still jointly owned by the family and his step mother who resides in Rock Hill, S.C.

For several years after the final Wallace Bros. season of 1944 the Rogers daughters and son remained active in circus business. Today, only Helene is still with it. She and her husband, John Hartzell, kept the Flying Hartzells act going for many years. They were with Hamid-Morton for nine seasons, were on the large King Bros. Circus in the mid 1950's and in more recent years spent two seasons with the Miller-Johnson Circus. In 1972, the Hartzell's, with their children and grandchildren organized a small motorized circus in the Pacific Northwest and selected for the title, Wallace

and Rogers Circus. This title of course combined the Rogers family name with that of the show it operated and thus is presenting to present day circus lovers a reminder of famous circuses and personalities of the past. The Wallace and Rogers show is a true family operated circus. It has been successful and is currently on the road. (1975).

Walter Rogers has stayed close to circus business most of the time since the final Wallace Bros. season in 1944. He was head mechanic on the Clyde Beatty Circus in 1945 and a few years later helped build with "Doc" Hall the equipment for Art Sturmark's new Biller Bros. Circus from the ground up in early 1949. In 1952 Walter had the ice wagon on the Ringling-Barnum Circus and in 1953 he replaced Eddie Yeske as wagon shop boss with that show. He was blacksmith and mechanic as well as wagon shop boss with Ringling-Barnum from 1953 until the show closed its under canvas operation in Pittsburg in 1956. At present (1975) he is living in Sarasota where he works for a concrete company and manages the Circus City Trailer Park, 930 Oriente Ave., which is adjacent to the former Ringling-Barnum quarters. He says his step mother still resides in Rock Hill, S.C. and that he owns a little property in York. He and his wife, who is from York, return every year or so to the town for a visit.

Ray's other two daughters, Norma, and Connie, now both retired from circus business, reside in the Gibsonton, Florida area.

Thus the story of Ray W. Rogers and his circuses comes to a close. He was a true pioneer of the motorized circus, the only showman to bring a fully organized circus from Canada to the United States and remain here with it, a man of unquestioned ability to organize, operate, and prosper with a circus which went thru the great depression of the early 30's, the sharp recession of 1938, and the trying days of World War II. May his memory and the memory of the shows he operated always remain bright.

I would like to thank the following individuals, without whose help this permanent history of the Ray W. Rogers Shows would not have been possible; Stuart Thayer, Garnett "Bud" Sims, Bob Parkinson and the Circus World Museum, Charlie Campbell, Chang Reynolds, Dave Price, L. Wilson Poarch, Tom Parkinson, Homer Walton, Paul Horsman and his Circus Memories Gift Shop and Museum, Denny Berkery, Gordon Potter, James M. Cameron, author of "About New Glasgow", Fred H. Phillips of the Provincial Archives, Fredrickton, N.B., Art Doc Miller, Michael Sporrer, J. R. Harry Sutherland, Publisher-Editor, The Evening News, New Glasgow, N.S., Miss Phyllis R. Blakely, Public Archives of Nova Scotia, all four of the Ray Rogers' children, Walter, Helene, Norma, and Connie, and last but not least, my associate, the editor of *The Bandwagon*, Fred Pfening Jr., who furnished by far the largest number of illustrations from his personal collection.

### The York, S.C. Quarters

Thru the years very little was ever written in either the trade publications or the journals of

the organized circus fans or historians concerning the circus quarters in York, S.C. Likewise, to date very few photographs have turned up and the few that have picture little of the buildings or otherwise physical plant. This lack of information or visual representation however does not dim the historical significance of the Rogers' quarters in York.

Actually York, which served as circus quarters from the winter of 1929-30 thru the winter of 1944-45, was in use longer than several other winterquarters sites which have appeared in *Bandwagon's* feature, "Famous Circus Landmarks" over the past few years, namely Culver City, Baldwin Park, and Rochester. Also York was in use as long as the famed Hagenbeck-Wallace and John Robinson quarters at West Baden, Indiana the last installment in the above mentioned series. In its own right the York Quarters could very well have been covered in the Famous Circus Landmark series but since there is a minimum of information available and a dearth of photographs the story is being run here as a supplement to the Ray W. Rogers article.

To review a few matters already covered to some extent in the main article the quarters in York were first used by Rogers and his Barnett Bros. Circus at the conclusion of the 1929 season. April 1930 saw the first of many season's openers for shows in York under the Rogers banner.

According to *The Billboard* the first quarters consisted of a fairly new stone building which was rented by Rogers and his partner, William Hamilton. It was in the heart of town and the building was described as being 150 x 200 ft. in diameter, one and a half stories high, and had been built at the cost of \$40,000 as a sales stable for horses and mules.

In the fall of 1930 Rogers made arrangements to purchase the building and site. An additional building acquired initially for use as a ring barn is also assumed to have been in the deal. The location of the quarters site was at East Jefferson and Trinity streets and was in close proximity to a railroad which was what Rogers wanted since he always held the possibility of some day moving his show by rail. At the time the Rogers show first moved the York the town's population was about 3,000.

In December 1937 construction began on a new building to be used for a cookhouse, dining room, sleeping quarters, and lumber (seats) storage. Three additional buildings

Photo No. 27 - Wallace Bros. truck No. 42 at York, S.C. quarters, spring of 1940. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)







**Photo No. 24 - Wallace Bros. semi No. 30 and cage semi at York, S.C. winter-quarters, early spring 1944. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)**

were to be constructed shortly thereafter. It is assumed that all of the new buildings were completed but details on them are lacking. Bert Pettus says that once Rogers got the new buildings into use he had a very fine quarters layout, fully as good as any comparable show. Rogers, personally, when at the quarters occupied a regular motorized living trailer but he had a farm near York and later purchased a home in Rock Hill, S.C.

The few photos we have show very little of the various buildings and it is not known how the original building plus the new ones built in the winter of 1937-38 fit into the overall picture. Photos show the site as being rather crowded and parts of it rather junky but this was no different from the vast majority of circus quarters at the time. One section of ground was used for the so called "old wagon graveyard" where old vehicles rested after being retired from active use.

The best detailed description of the York quarters comes from CHS Garnett "Bud" Sims of Muskegon, Mich. who was there several weeks prior to going out with Wallace Bros. for its final tour in 1944. He also provided the sketch map drawn from his memory of the place during his short stay.

Bud was discharged from the army in December 1943 on account of rheumatic fever and he says he was still young and looking for adventure and sought it by joining up with the Wallace show as a member of the elephant department for the 1944 season. He didn't remain until the close but left to join Cole Bros. after several weeks on the road. Going out with

**Photo No. 28 - Pole storage area at York, S.C. quarters early spring of 1940. Note old Barnett Bros. trucks in background. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)**



**Photo No. 25 - The Flying Hartzell's practice rigging at Wallace Bros. quarters, York, S.C., early spring 1940. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)**

roll-o-plane stored in quarters which he sold before the show opened.

"The bunk house had one large front room which contained a stove which heated all of the house, a table, the telephone, and a barber chair. (Don't know why the barber chair was there). Many a business transaction was conducted by phone. I recall on many occasions listening to Ginsberg, the purchasing agent, buying paint from some distance source. It was scarce, I guess. Maybe it was the yellow color which was hard to come by. A hallway ran down the center of the bunk house with four small rooms leading off to each side. An upper and lower bunk bed hung on each wall which accommodated four men to each room. Two private rooms were at the end of the building with private entrances to the outside.

"The entire quarters was on flat ground with the exception of the northwest corner. There was a gradual incline leading up to the hay barn, then it was flat again. In this area Hartzell had his rigging up and he and Helene ran through their routine almost daily. Closeby the bull line was strung out and the animals chained there during the day. It was a regular ritual each day to take the elephants up to the chain, then clean out the barn. Manure was loaded on a three wheel trailer and one bull was used to push it up near the hay barn where it was unloaded on a pile. Before supper the elephants were returned to the barn, watered, and fed.

"Meals for the quarters crew were very good. Nothing fancy but tasty and plenty of it. The cook was Joe Brown, fat, and like all good

**Photo No. 31 - Group of Wallace Bros. trucks parked at York, S.C. quarters, February 1940. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)**



Wallace was to be Bud's first circus experience. He left Muskegon in a snow storm for York. Soon after arriving he quickly became a member of the Wallace family where he met many friends, including the Hartzells. He terms the show truly a family affair and says he encountered many new experiences as a First of May, had exciting moments, and enjoyed every bit of it.

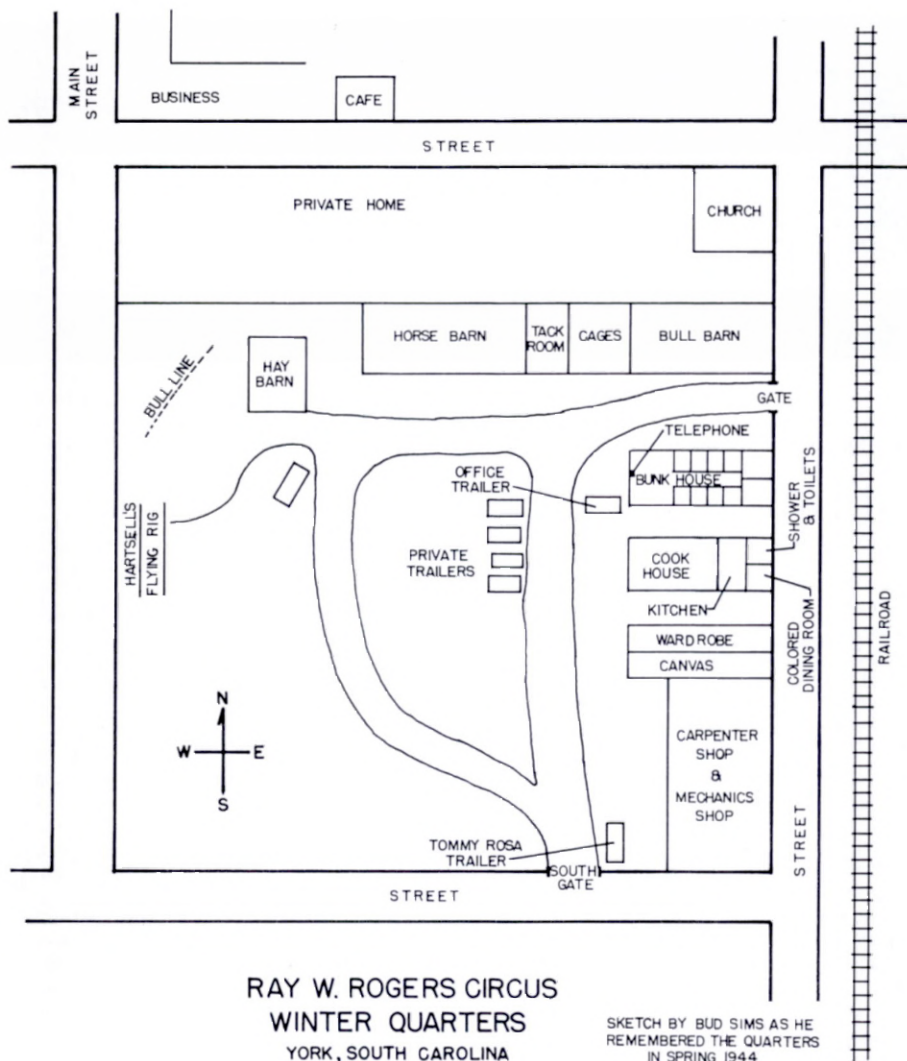
Bud recalls Jack Fox was in charge of preparations and would be the top man on the road in 1944. Rogers personally was never around the quarters except at the time the elephants were going on a date in March to play the Marine Base at Camp Davis and Bud remembers Rogers asking if the bull trucks were ready for the road. Rogers sat on the running board of one truck with him and drew a map of how to get to the camp with the caravan which Johnny Hartzell was to head.

Bud Sims remembers the quarters layout as follows.

"The winter quarters was almost a full city block square. It had a six foot wooden fence around the east and south sides. The north side was closed with buildings and the west side had a regular woven wire fence. The wooden fence was painted in a dark gray with large red lettering, 'Wallace Bros. Circus Winter Quarters'. There was one gate that could be closed on the east side but usually it remained open. Another large gate was located on the south side and was closed and bolted around sundown each day.

"The quarters office trailer sat right at the front door to the bunk house and this made it an easy arrangement for the phone was located just inside the bunk house. Walter Bromley was in charge when Fox would be gone for several days. The second day after I arrived two semis were driven in from St. Louis. One driver was Bert Pettus who didn't have a full time job with the show as he was preparing to depart for the army at any time. The trucks were still lettered, DeLang Carnival. Fox had a





cooks if we didn't eat seconds or thirds he was mad.

"Walter Rogers with a small crew did a good job of turning out new sleepers. All were framed out of wood, sides, tops, and all. Some of the semis seemed to have a sway back but they did look sharp with the new yellow paint and black lettering. The McIntosh brothers had all the engines running and ready to roll on

time. A big giant of a colored man named Brown was in full charge of the tires. Each truck had a stamp in the front window bearing the letter "S". I don't believe they had any

**Photo No. 29 - Wallace Bros. semi No. 24 at York, S.C. quarters following heavy snow, February 1940. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)**



problem getting gasoline and I don't remember any instances of any major breakdowns on the road.

"An elderly gentleman painted the trucks yellow. Had a crew of three working with him. He did all of the scroll work and lettering himself and did a beautiful job. On the back end of the cookhouse he lettered the words, "The Boston Bean" but they made him paint over it and leave it blank.

"Jack Grady came in one day and talked about the advance work. I listened to him and some of the others discuss their past experiences and only wish I had recorded it because it was most interesting.

"During the winter a new device was fabricated to load canvas into the truck. If I remember right it worked well in quarters but on the road they returned to the man and muscle method to put canvas in the truck. A large howdah was carried and was used on the lead bull in the spec. This was the most awkward thing I ever encountered in taking care. We had a time getting it on the bull and then a hard time getting it on the top of the truck cab where it was carried. One night we forgot to load it and it remained on the lot but I don't think anyone missed it, for sure not us in the elephant department.

"Capt. Engerer drove his beat up truck into the quarters about a month before the show opened. They tuned up the motor, painted the truck yellow, and it looked much better. Engerer didn't use any chutes. They would just back the truck up to the steel arena and let his five male lions go in. He also used two big hounds with this act.

"We opened in York with all new white canvas on the northeast side of town. The day before the debut it rained hard but opening day the sun was out and it was big business in the city of York.

"On the road we in the elephant department had sleeping quarters in the front of the bull trucks. Two semis and one straight bed truck were used to carry the five elephants. Our job was to put up the menagerie, take care of the bulls, help pull up the big top, make spec, put on our act, then take down the menagerie at night. This left very little time for sleep as you had to stay awake while moving overland at night. A large block of wood was carried in the cab and it was my job if the truck stalled on a hill to jump out and slip it behind a wheel. Air brakes were not like they are today. I've heard truck drivers talking about loads they have driven but I don't believe they have experienced anything like an elephant truck. Going down grade the bull could lean back and the truck would slow down. Likewise going up hill by leaning forward the truck would lurch ahead."

#### ADDRESS CHANGE REMINDER

Once again we must advise that issues of the Bandwagon that are lost due to old addresses can not be replaced free of charge. The Postal Service will not forward bulk mail, the old address and the new one are sent back to the publisher with 10c postage due. The magazine is discarded.

If you have a postal box number it will not be forwarded.



# ONESHOT

By STUART THAYER

A copy of Warren A. Reeder, Jr.'s "No Performance Today" recently came to hand and we found it to be a fine effort in historical research. Happily, it combines two of our personal interests, the American circus and local history. It is the story of the 1918 wreck in Hammond, Indiana of the second section of the Hagenbeck-Wallace train and a government troop train.

The catastrophes have always had an appeal to readers and writers and none more than wrecks and collisions whether they be by train, ship or airplane. Like battles, transportation mishaps have a beginning, a middle and an end and can be closely questioned and often end in trials or hearings that add to the ease with which they can be transcribed. To the reader the questions rise such as why?, how?, what will happen next?

In the course of his book Mr. Reeder suggests that the second worst railroad accident in circus history (his subject being the worst in terms of loss of life) occurred in Durand, Michigan in 1903. This remark sparked our inquisitiveness as to the details of the Durand affair and we have the following evidence to offer.

Durand, forty miles northeast of Lansing and eighteen miles southwest of Flint, was the division point on the Grand Trunk Railroad between its Chicago and Michigan divisions. A Canadian road, the Grand Trunk was kept out of Michigan in the early days through the influence wielded in congress by Commodore Vanderbilt. The Grand Trunk had rails into Windsor, Ontario, across from Detroit. Vanderbilt owned the Michigan Central which ran from Detroit to Chicago. He had no desire to have a competing road parallel his over that lucrative stretch. However, the Grand Trunk also went into Sarnia, Ontario across from Port Huron, Michigan and with the help of towns such as Bay City and Saginaw eventually got permission to cross into Michigan. Once they got to Durand it was possible to arrange a line into Chicago, thus verifying the Arab folktale of the camel getting his nose in the tent.

The Great Wallace Show played Charlotte, Michigan, twenty miles southwest of Lansing, on August 6, 1903 and was billed in Lapeer for August 7. Moving in two sections, the first of twenty-one cars, the second of seventeen, the circus loaded and left Charlotte in good time. When the second section passed through Lansing it had to cross from one track to another, both on the Grand Trunk. Engineer Charles M. Probst "lapped" the brake valve as he made this transfer. "Lapping" was a common way to reduce speed for a short period in expectation of increasing it again without stopping. It was much like having the brakes on but lightly while moving. Once done, however, and with the throttle advanced to resume speed, it was necessary to put the brake valve back into release, or running, position in order to restore air to the system. Otherwise, the brakes were still partially engaged and bleeding the air cylinder. Probst failed to return the brakes to release as he picked up speed leaving Lansing.

Forty miles ahead, in Durand, the first section stopped to take on coal and water 1500 feet west of the Durand station. When Probst reached a point a quarter-mile west of the halted first section he saw a semaphore indicating the track ahead was blocked. He applied his brakes and "had no air."

He immediately began sounding his whistle in short blasts, a signal to his train crew to man the brake wheels by hand, but there was no time. Probst, his fireman and the head brakeman leaped from the train. The second section engine smashed into the caboose and rear sleeper of the stationary first section. The engine then left the track and rolled over in the wayside ditch. The tender went into the opposite ditch and the first car - a horse car - was torn apart as the cars behind it piled up against it.

A witness said there was dead silence for an instant, then people and animals began screaming. A car checker and an engine foreman were one block from the crash scene, making up

a freight train. The car checker ran to get the yard master. The yard master sent him to wake all the doctors living west of Saginaw Street while the yard master went to wake those living east of Saginaw. In a small town, they both knew where all the doctors lived. There were eight physicians in Durand at the time.

Done with this, the young car checker helped pull two survivors from the first section caboose. They laid them on a baggage cart and pushed it to the Hotel Richelieu (now the Durand Hotel). A young girl living nearby helped her father harness a team which they hitched to a wagon and used to carry survivors to the hotel.

"It was a grim sight," one lady later said, "Dead and injured men were lying along the tracks. Two camels and an elephant lay in a heap."

Draft horses were running through the streets, animals were roaring, all in the pre-dawn darkness. Twenty-six men were dead. Two railroad officials and the circus trainmaster died in the caboose. Nine of the sixty sleeping men in the sleeper ahead of the caboose were killed. Six men sleeping in the horse car behind the second section tender were lost.

The Richelieu Hotel had become a temporary hospital; nothing else was open at night. Four men died there. Sixty of the injured were taken to Harper Hospital in Detroit where four more died. All the dead and injured were workmen from the Pullman at the end of the first section.

Twelve cars were demolished. Three camels, a dog, a horse and the elephant Maude were lost. Doctors and morticians from surrounding towns came to help. Among them, oddly enough, Russell P. Wixom of the Wixom circus family.

Eight of the dead were unidentified and unclaimed. They are buried in Lovejoy Cemetery, two miles south of Durand, beneath a marble obelisk. A long trench was dug next to the right-of-way in Durand for the burial of the animals.

The show cancelled its Friday and Saturday dates in Lapeer and Caro and opened on Monday in Bay City. Probst, the engineer, was fined by the railroad after admitting his negligence at a coroner's hearing. The young car checker rose to be superintendent of terminals for the Grand Trunk and was interviewed in August, 1965 by a reporter named Duchaine from the Lansing *State Journal*. It is from that interview that this information was obtained.







# SIG SAUTELLES, 2

CIRCUSES  
MUSEUMS  
MENAGERIES  
HIPPODROMES

NINE CONSOLIDATED RAILROAD SHOWS

AND HISTORICAL  
WILD WEST

